

DUANE F. WATSON AND ALAN J. HAUSER

RHETORICAL CRITICISM OF THE BIBLE

*A Comprehensive Bibliography
with Notes on History and Method*



BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION SERIES

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VOLUME 4



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with Notes on History and Method*

BY

DUANE F. WATSON

AND

ALAN J. HAUSER



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**To my maternal grandparents
who have always been so supportive**

**Carl Gilbert Taylor
and
Marion Alice Fargo Taylor**

Duane F. Watson

**To my lovely wife Gail,
and to the four young ladies
who keep us young.**

Alan J. Hauser

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Alan J. Hauser

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Duane F. Watson

PREFACE

Literary analysis of the Bible, in which rhetorical criticism has played a significant role, has gained broad acceptance among biblical scholars in recent years. In light of this development we felt that scholars already working in literary criticism as well as others wishing to become more actively involved would profit from a volume which provided a comprehensive bibliography for each testament. While the focus of the bibliographies is on rhetorical criticism, numerous other works have also been included, either because they substantially parallel what rhetorical critics have done, or because they provide important insights on literary artistry and the way it was practiced by biblical writers. If the volume is comprehensive, it certainly cannot claim to be exhaustive, both because so many works are already in print, and because the growing interest in the literary artistry of the Bible is leading to many new publications.

There are some differences in the way rhetorical criticism is defined and how it functions in the two testaments. This will become evident as the reader compares the two introductory essays and consults the various bibliographic entries for the two testaments. It goes without saying, however, that the commonality is quite substantial, just as it is between rhetorical criticism and other areas of literary analysis. To a substantial degree, the differences in definition result from the different character of the two testaments and the different environments in which they arose.

It is our hope that amassing what has been written and putting it into a larger perspective will provide a ready tool to facilitate research in this productive field of inquiry.

Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
<i>AJBI</i>	<i>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>AnBib</i>	<i>Analecta biblica</i>
<i>AnCracov</i>	<i>Analecta Cracoviensia</i>
<i>ANQ</i>	<i>Andover Newton Quarterly</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>AOAT</i>	<i>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</i>
<i>AsiaJTh</i>	<i>Asia Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ATANT</i>	<i>Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments</i>
<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
<i>AnsBR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
<i>AUSS</i>	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BBB</i>	<i>Bonner biblische Beiträge</i>
<i>BBET</i>	<i>Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie</i>
<i>BCPE</i>	<i>Bulletin de Centre Protestant d'Études</i>
<i>BETL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium</i>
<i>BEvT</i>	<i>Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie</i>
<i>BHT</i>	<i>Beiträge zur historischen Theologie</i>
<i>BI</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibB</i>	<i>Biblische Beiträge</i>
<i>Bij</i>	<i>Bijdragen</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
<i>BJS</i>	<i>Brown Judaic Studies</i>
<i>BM</i>	<i>Beth Mikra</i>
<i>BR</i>	<i>Biblical Research</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>Burg</i>	<i>Burgense</i>
<i>BurH</i>	<i>Buried History</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>BZAW</i>	<i>Beihefte zur ZAW</i>

BZNW	Beihefte zur ZNW
CahLV	Cahiers voor Levensverdieping
CB	<i>Classical Bulletin</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CH	<i>Church History</i>
ChrLit	<i>Christianity and Literature</i>
CI	<i>Critical Inquiry</i>
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
CJT	<i>Canadian Journal of Theology</i>
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica, New Testament
ConcorJ	<i>Concordia Journal</i>
CovQ	<i>Covenant Quarterly</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CQR	<i>Church Quarterly Review</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
CriswellThR	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
CSSJ	<i>Central States Speech Journal</i>
CT	<i>Christianity Today</i>
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
CTM	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
CurTM	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
CW	<i>Classical World</i>
DJG	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i>
DTT	<i>Dansk teologisk tidsskrift</i>
ÉgT	<i>Église et Théologie</i>
EKL	<i>Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon</i>
ET	English Translation
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
ETR	<i>Etudes théologiques et religieuses</i>
ETSMS	Evangelical Theological Society Monograph Series
EvJ	<i>Evangelical Journal</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
EvT	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
Exp	<i>Expositor</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FFF	<i>Foundations and Facets Forum</i>
FFNT	<i>Foundations and Facets: New Testament</i>
FilolNT	<i>Filologia Neotestamentaria</i>
FoiVie	<i>Foi et Vie</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>

GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
GT	German Translation
GTA	Göttinger theologische Arbeiten
GTJ	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
GTT	<i>Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift</i>
HAR	Hebrew Annual Review
Has	<i>Hasifrut</i>
HervTS	<i>Hervormde Theologiese Studies</i>
HeyJ	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HS	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
IB	<i>Interpreter's Bible</i>
IDB	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
IDBS	<i>Supplementary Volume to IDB</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
ISBE	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> , 2nd ed.
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBR	<i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JLT	<i>Journal of Literature and Theology</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSS	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament- Supplement Series</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSS	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament- Supplement Series</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
JTSOA	<i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
LB	<i>Linguistica Biblica</i>

LCBIS	Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation Series
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio divina
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LL	<i>The Living Light</i>
LQ	<i>Lutheran Quarterly</i>
LTP	<i>Laval théologique et philosophique</i>
MelT	<i>Melita Theologica</i>
MeyerK	H.A.W. Meyer, <i>Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament</i>
NedTTs	<i>Nederlands theologisch tijdschrift</i>
Neot	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NGTT	<i>Nederduits Gereformeerde Theologiese Tydskrif</i>
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum, Supplements
NRT	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i>
NTAbh	<i>Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
OBt	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OPTAT	<i>Occasional Papers in Translation and Textlinguistics</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
PC	Proclamation Commentaries
PEGLS	<i>Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society</i>
PEGLMBS	<i>Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies</i>
PR	<i>Philosophy and Rhetoric</i>
Proof	<i>Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History</i>
PRS	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
PQ	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
QJS	<i>Quarterly Journal of Speech</i>
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RefTR	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
RelIntelLife	<i>Religion and Intellectual Life</i>
RelLit	<i>Religion and Literature</i>
RelSRev	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
ResQ	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
RevistB	<i>Revista bíblica</i>
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
RoczHum	<i>Roczniki Humanistyczne</i>
RQ	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>

<i>RSPT</i>	<i>Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques</i>
<i>RSQ</i>	<i>Rhetoric Society Quarterly</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
<i>SBL</i>	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SBLBSNA</i>	SBL Biblical Scholarship in North America
<i>SBLDS</i>	SBL Dissertation Series
<i>SBLSBS</i>	SBL Sources for Biblical Study
<i>SBLSS</i>	SBL Semeia Studies
<i>SBS</i>	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
<i>SCHNT</i>	Studia ad corpus hellenicum novi testamenti
<i>ScrHier</i>	<i>Scripta hierosolymitana</i>
<i>SE</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
<i>SEÅ</i>	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
<i>SEAJT</i>	<i>South East Asia Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SHR</i>	Studies in the History of Religions
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>Skri/K</i>	<i>Skri en Kerk</i>
<i>SM</i>	<i>Speech Monographs</i>
<i>SNT</i>	Studien zum Neuen Testament
<i>SNTSMS</i>	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SO</i>	<i>Symbolae osloenses</i>
<i>SPB</i>	Studia postbiblica
<i>SR</i>	<i>Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
<i>StPat</i>	<i>Studia Patavina</i>
<i>STS</i>	<i>Semitics</i>
<i>StudNeot</i>	Studia neotestamentica, Studia
<i>SUNT</i>	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
<i>SWJT</i>	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TEv</i>	<i>Theologia Evangelica</i>
<i>TGI</i>	<i>Theologie und Glaube</i>
<i>ThH</i>	<i>Théologie historique</i>
<i>ThViat</i>	<i>Theologia Viatorum</i>
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TQ</i>	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>
<i>TRE</i>	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TSK</i>	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
<i>TU</i>	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen</i>
<i>TvT</i>	<i>Tijdschrift voor Theologie</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>USQR</i>	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>

<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
<i>VD</i>	<i>Verbum domini</i>
<i>VE</i>	<i>Vox Evangelica</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>WW</i>	<i>Word and World</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZAW Sup</i>	ZAW Supplement
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

PART I
RHETORICAL CRITICISM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Alan J. Hauser

NOTES ON HISTORY AND METHOD

1. Introduction

The first matter to be addressed is defining rhetorical criticism in the context of Old Testament scholarship. In one sense that is a fairly easy matter, since some basic points of consensus among rhetorical critics can be presented. Yet, in another sense defining rhetorical criticism is more difficult, both because there is some disagreement about the basics of rhetorical criticism among those who practice it,¹ and, more importantly, because rhetorical criticism has much in common with the other varieties of literary analysis which have grown so rapidly among Old Testament scholars in recent years.² If part of defining a word or phrase is to set its boundaries, defining rhetorical criticism is problematic because it is often difficult to know where to draw sharp lines between it and other forms of literary criticism. Likewise, at times it can be difficult to judge which term best characterizes a certain scholar's work. In literary analysis, as in many other aspects of life, categories are not hermetically sealed from one another. Perhaps it is best to think of literary analysis in contemporary Old Testament scholarship as a spectrum in which various literary approaches, including rhetorical criticism, blend into one another like colors do in a spectrum of light.

¹I disagree with T.B. Dozeman ("Old Testament Rhetorical Criticism," *ABD* 5.712-15) who describes a "Muilenburg School" with a particular agenda and methodology. In fact, there is substantial diversity among those who call themselves rhetorical critics and see themselves to be following Muilenburg's lead. For example, there is disagreement regarding whether or not it is sound method to ask questions concerning the intent of the writer. Furthermore, the methodological boundaries between those who call themselves rhetorical critics and other literary critics with reasonably similar approaches are often very fuzzy. Thus, it makes little sense to speak of a "Muilenburg School."

²In contemporary Old Testament scholarship, the phrase "literary criticism" needs to be understood as it would be by scholars working outside the field of biblical studies, who use the term to refer to an analysis of the significant artistic features of a literary work. In the discussion that follows, I use the phrases "literary criticism" and "literary analysis" in this sense. The phrase is not (and no longer should be) used to refer to the identification of literary sources lying behind the biblical text, an unusual nuance of "literary criticism" that has been confined to the circle of biblical scholarship.

See the excellent article by R. Rendtorff, "The Paradigm is Changing: Hopes and Fears," *BI* 1 (1993) 34-53. Rendtorff discusses the impact that literary studies and other recently emerging fields within biblical studies have had on the basic assumptions of Old Testament scholars. In the same issue of *BI*, D.J.A. Clines also discusses the impact of what he calls "new literary criticism" in his article, "Possibilities and Priorities of Biblical Interpretation in an International Perspective" (pp. 82-87).

That having been said, let me attempt a functional definition of rhetorical criticism. Rhetorical criticism is a form of literary criticism which uses our knowledge of the conventions of literary composition practiced in ancient Israel and its environment to discover and analyze the particular literary artistry found in a specific unit of Old Testament text. This analysis then provides a basis for discussing the message of the text and the impact it had on its audience.³ Clearly, this definition implies that rhetorical critics wish to avoid the trap of judging the literary artistry of the Old Testament by modern or contemporary literary standards, which often are quite different than those used in ancient Israel. New Testament rhetorical critics have available to them handbooks of rhetoric from Greece and Rome, along with a large body of Greek and Latin literature, which serve as resources providing examples of contemporary literary artistry. Old Testament rhetorical critics, however, must look primarily to the Old Testament itself as the source of knowledge about the practice of literary artistry in ancient Israel, with some assistance from examples of contemporary ancient Near Eastern literature. Using this knowledge, they seek to give a unit of text a "close reading" in order to understand how the literary conventions used in ancient Israel were given particular shape and content in order to convey a specific, unique message.

Returning to the metaphor of the spectrum of scholarship among Old Testament literary critics, one can see that what rhetorical critics seek to accomplish is likely to form at least part of the agenda for other Old Testament literary critics. That being the case, it is clear that not only is it often difficult to draw a sharp line between rhetorical criticism and other forms of Old Testament literary criticism, as already noted; there also seems little point in attempting to do so. Very early in the process of assembling this bibliography I saw that the methods of various literary critics were interwoven with one another like roots in a dense thicket, and it did not make sense to try to tear them apart. I have therefore chosen to risk erring on the side of inclusiveness rather than on the side of exclusiveness, allowing the readers more latitude to choose which works seem appropriate to their purposes. In this case, using too fine a sieve to screen the bibliography seemed to disadvantage the readers.

Therefore, in the bibliography which follows this introductory essay I have included not only works by scholars who see themselves as rhetorical critics, but also other works which have a focus and purpose at least a portion of which parallels or resembles what rhetorical critics seek to accomplish. Some approaches, such as structuralism, have less in common

³J. Muilenburg's "Form Criticism and Beyond" (*JBL* 88 [1969] 1-18) presents his founding vision of what rhetorical criticism should be. Muilenburg was a key player in helping launch the current interest in literary analysis among Old Testament scholars.

with rhetorical criticism than other methods of literary analysis. Consequently, I have included in the bibliography substantially fewer works from types of literary analysis that are more remote from rhetorical criticism.

Since the primary purpose of this volume is to present an extensive bibliography, I cannot go into great detail describing theory or method. I will, however, make some preliminary comments on the relationship of rhetorical criticism to previous methods of Old Testament scholarship, and on the way rhetorical criticism approaches the text. I will also discuss very briefly some works which have been important in the growth of literary analysis, and especially rhetorical criticism, among Old Testament scholars.

2. Rhetorical Criticism's Relationship to Biblical Scholarship since Wellhausen

2.1 Source Criticism

A primary goal of source criticism as practiced in the 19th and 20th centuries was to probe behind the biblical text to discover earlier literary sources presumed to be more ancient and revealing about the history, religion, sociology, and politics of early Israel. While the biblical text was, of necessity, the starting point for such analysis, the fundamental assumption was that it is not, as received, the most fruitful object of extensive study. The primary value of the text lay in its being a depository for these earlier materials, which were more useful and interesting than the biblical text itself.⁴ Thus, the text was viewed as an aggregate of literary sources which often were not pieced together very well and could be identified and separated by the careful scholar. Discussion of the text was likely to begin with a catalogue of its various sources, so that the scholar could proceed quickly to studying these earlier sources in detail. There was little interest in studying extensive units of the biblical text as literary pieces which might present a coherent perspective of their own. Indeed, because the text was seen to have been rather imperfectly pieced together, with the earlier sources having been diced into numerous small pieces by the final editor(s), interspersed with one another, and in many cases partially omitted, the biblical text was often viewed as an impediment to the scholar who sought to recover the earlier literary units and the knowledge they conveyed about early Israel.

Rhetorical criticism has shifted away from this perspective, and does not assume that extensive portions of the biblical text must be studied first and foremost as compilations of shorter, more ancient sources. It argues that substantial portions of the text often possess a consistency and unity of

⁴Compare Rendtorff's discussion, "Paradigm," 34-45.

purpose well worth studying. This approach analyzes units of text in light of literary devices and techniques commonly employed in ancient Israel and among its neighbors, the assumption being that knowledge of these literary features can help us understand the logic and structure of the biblical text in its present form.

While the approach of rhetorical critics does not require that they dismiss the findings of source critics, these findings often are not particularly relevant to the task of those approaching the Bible from a literary perspective.⁵ Rhetorical critics prefer to examine units of the text on the assumption that they may, on close analysis, prove to be artfully-composed, coherent wholes designed to convey particular messages to their audiences, rather than on the assumption that these texts constitute coarsely-woven fabrics made up of various threads which need to be isolated and reformulated before they may be studied profitably. Just as in viewing a montage one focuses on the artistic effect of the composite work even though the component parts may be visible, so a rhetorical critic focuses on the literary effect of a unit of biblical text rather than on the specific character of whatever pieces may have been combined to form that unit.

Rhetorical critics have seen that stylistic elements often perceived by 19th and 20th century scholarship as indicators of less-than-skilled editorial work may in fact be devices widely accepted by ancient Israelites (and non-Israelites) as part of the repertory of skilled writers. For example, repetition normally is *not* viewed in modern western culture as a sign of skilled prose composition, and source critics often have classified cases of repetition in biblical prose under pejorative terms such as "redundant" or "contradictory." Consequently, the use of repetition in a biblical text can easily be interpreted, by scholars who operate (probably unknowingly) with modern literary standards, as an indication that an unskilled editor has imperfectly joined different prose sources. However, as the very foundation of biblical Hebrew poetry suggests, repetition was commonly accepted in

⁵See Rendtorff's terse assessment of source criticism: "I believe that the traditional Documentary Hypothesis has come to an end" ("Paradigm," 44). A few lines later he adds, "The Wellhausen paradigm no longer functions as a commonly accepted presupposition for Old Testament exegesis." Rendtorff's statement sounds both bold and obvious. It is quite clear that for many scholars the documentary hypothesis has moved to the sidelines. The fact that Rendtorff's statement sounds bold only indicates the resiliency with which the documentary hypothesis has dominated 20th century scholarship. Times are changing, however, and perhaps a thoroughgoing reappraisal of the fundamentals of Old Testament scholarship is in order. Already in 1978, D.J.A. Clines had expressed serious concern about the tendency in Old Testament scholarship to emphasize reconstructing the sources of the biblical text, and to atomize the text, both tendencies resulting in the neglect of the final form of the text (*The Theme of the Pentateuch* [Sheffield Academic, 1978] 7-15). Today, a growing number of scholars share Clines' concern.

ancient Israel and elsewhere as a standard means of literary expression. It is therefore inconsistent for scholars to acknowledge that repetition in the various forms of parallelism was the basis of Hebrew poetry, but yet to deny that repetition could be a commonly accepted literary device in prose. Likewise, consistency of meter has often been used as a standard by which to measure the unity and quality of a piece of ancient Hebrew poetry. Yet, there is ample indication that ancient Israelite poets often varied meter within a poetic piece in order to accomplish particular literary purposes. Inconsistency in meter need not indicate that earlier poetic sources may have been merged imperfectly. Neither does it require that scholars alter a poetic text in order to achieve a consistency of meter that (supposedly) was in the text when first composed but has been lost.

The key question is whether a unit of the text in its present form can function as a well-composed piece according to the standards of literary composition accepted in ancient Israel. Admittedly, the rhetorical critic's task is complicated by the lack of any textbooks of ancient Hebrew rhetoric, which could be used to establish what constituted literary artistry in ancient Israel. For example, we may not completely understand what constituted a contradiction in the eyes of an ancient Israelite writer, or how that compares to modern definitions of contradiction. One can, however, use a sustained, extensive study of texts in the Old Testament and in associated literature as a means of obtaining a good understanding of commonly-accepted literary standards in ancient Israel. To the extent to which one can recover ancient Israelite literary models, those models should direct any attempts to understand the literary artistry of particular biblical texts. Admittedly, scholars need to be on guard against the unavoidable temptation to fall back into modern standards of literary acceptability when studying ancient texts, but knowledge of that danger should not deter them from working diligently to learn as much as possible about ancient Israelite literary style from the texts we have received. There certainly is less danger in trying to put aside modern literary presuppositions, realizing that complete success is not attainable, than there is in failing to understand (as source critics often have) that the literary standards used to judge biblical texts may be closely tied to contemporary western cultural assumptions. Due to the cultural gap between modern scholars and ancient Israelite writers, all efforts to understand ancient Israelite literary conventions need to be assessed and refined regularly.

2.2 Form Criticism

Form criticism sets out in a different direction from source criticism. Nevertheless, it adopts without question a key assumption of such criticism: the biblical text is an archive of earlier literary units, a repository whose current structure is best bypassed quickly in any attempt to recover the individual literary units which can help us learn about the life and history

of early Israel. Form critics differ from source critics in that they are not interested in studying the lengthy literary sources which source critics claim Israelite writers had pieced together. Rather, form critics are interested in discovering the various life settings which led to the development of short, stylized literary forms specifically designed to address those settings. Despite their differences from source critics, form critics join them in viewing the biblical text as useful primarily because it contains within it earlier literary units which can be valuable to those attempting to study the life of early Israel.

Rhetorical critics do not deny the usefulness of what form critics have done, especially since knowledge of the context in which a particular literary form was used can be helpful in understanding the way in which a specific iteration of that form was later utilized by an Israelite writer within a larger literary unit. However, form criticism is viewed primarily as a useful preliminary which can help rhetorical critics understand larger units in their current form.

Thus, with rhetorical criticism the hermeneutical emphasis shifts considerably. The biblical text is on center stage, and its literary artistry and message are the focus of analysis. Knowledge concerning earlier, smaller units within the text is secondary, serving as a means to assist in understanding the biblical text, which remains the center of attention. A rhetorical critic may not study a unit of text as large as an entire biblical book. In fact, the text to be studied will normally be more limited in scope. Once the scope of the text is established, a rhetorical critic typically focuses on questions of structure, unity, literary technique, and balance in the unit under consideration, whatever the previous history of smaller units within it may have been.

Since rhetorical critics are interested in studying the literary features which tie a textual unit together and focus its message, of necessity the emphasis lies on the specific ways in which the particular text under study is integrated. Well-known forms may be observed, but the way in which they are embodied in the text under study receives the most attention. Herein lies another key difference between rhetorical criticism and form criticism. Form criticism emphasizes the regularity of the literary pattern or form, and a particular text is then seen as an example of that form. Rhetorical criticism is interested in how a certain form was adapted in order to meet the specific needs of the larger literary unit into which it is integrated. Thus, the form critic is more interested in the typical and the expected, while the rhetorical critic is more interested in variations on the typical. This is not to say that form critics have no interest in looking at the way a form is particularized, nor is it to say that rhetorical critics avoid the generic study of forms and the *Sitzen-im-Leben* in which they were used: Nevertheless, the primary emphasis in rhetorical criticism is different than in form criticism.

2.3 Summary of Rhetorical Criticism's Relationship to Previous Scholarship

Rhetorical critics see substantial limitations in source criticism and form criticism, such as source criticism's tendency to use literary criteria derived from modern culture as a basis for finding inconsistencies in the biblical text and separating it into earlier sources, or source criticism's tendency to dice the biblical text into tiny components. Rhetorical critics recognize, however, a difference in purpose between their focus and that of these other approaches. Both source criticism and form criticism have as a primary goal the recovery of earlier literary units in order that these units might open the way for a more complete knowledge of the life of early Israel. Indeed, one could say that this approach to studying the Tanak dominated Old Testament scholarship well past the middle of the 20th century. Rhetorical critics normally prefer to leave the task of recovering the history and life of early Israel to others. Instead, they are interested in studying the literary artistry of a particular unit in the context of literary artistry as practiced in ancient Israel, and in studying the impact that the literary piece being analyzed would have had on an ancient Israelite audience.

3. Rhetorical Criticism's Approach to the Text of the Old Testament⁶

If a rhetorical critic is interested in studying literary artistry in a particular biblical text, what type of matters are in the forefront of such an analysis? As Muilenburg noted in his 1968 Presidential address, a key initial consideration is the identification of the boundaries of the unit to be studied.⁷ Units can vary in length from substantially less than a chapter to an entire biblical book. A primary concern is to find integrating devices that bond the unit together and help set its boundaries. These devices could include: a word, a phrase, or even a longer cluster of words that appears near the beginning and near the end of the literary unit, and perhaps also intermittently in the middle (e.g., Amos 1-2, with its frequent repetition of "Thus says the Lord, 'For three transgressions of and for four, I will not reverse the judgment'"). They could include a development in theme or plot that runs through an extensive unit of text (e.g., I Kgs. 17-19, wherein Elijah struggles with death in the stories of the ravens and the Brook Cherith, the

⁶Rhetorical critics are not all of one mind, as already noted. Therefore, I need to acknowledge that what follows reflects *my* approach to rhetorical criticism. However, most rhetorical critics would, I believe, concur in most of what I say.

⁷"Form Criticism and Beyond," 8-10.

widow and her son, Obadiah, and Jezebel's threat to Elijah's life).⁸ Or, a device could be as simple but inclusive as clustering a series of stories treating a certain individual (e.g., the Samson cycle, or the stories concerning Jephthah). The range of possibilities regarding integrating devices is limited only by the degree of literary creativity possessed by the biblical writer. Finding these integrating devices is typically the first major task, since this enables a rhetorical critic to define the limits of the unit being studied.

A biblical text will normally contain smaller and larger units on which the critic can focus. A smaller literary unit can have its own tight literary integrity while also being subsumed within a larger literary unit which possesses its own literary cohesiveness. Thus, a careful analysis of one level of structuring can often shed light on larger or smaller structural units.

Consequently, once the broad, unifying structure of a piece has been identified, the rhetorical critic will seek to identify subunits which contribute to the cohesiveness of the larger unit. In the example of Amos 1-2, the repetitious phrases not only provide integrating devices that bond the whole piece, but also mark the beginning of each new subunit of the text. Each repetition of "Thus says the Lord, 'For three transgressions of and for four, I will not reverse the judgment'" introduces a new oracle, and the name of the new nation mentioned within each iteration of the formula helps accentuate the movement to a new subsection. Each subunit has its own cohesiveness, which is focused around the pattern of messenger formula, word of accusation, and word of doom that recurs in each sub-unit. The repetition of this pattern seven times prior to the introduction of the longer unit on Israel (2:6-16) provides a literary rhythm that ties the larger unit closely together while also preparing for the powerful critique of Israel.

In the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), new sub-scenes are indicated not by repetitious phrases, but by frequent and striking shifts of scene, introduced by means of devices such as: the use of an imperative as the first word in a new scene ("Hear," v.3, the double imperative "Awake, Awake," v.12, and "Curse," v.23); the use of common transitional words ("In the days of," v.6, "Then," v.22); or the use of attention-grabbing phrases that force the reader to raise questions and search for the new context ("Most blessed of women," v.24, "Out of the window she gazed," v.28). The unity of the poem derives from the cumulative effect of these diverse sub-scenes upon the reader, rather than from a repetition of key integrating words or phrases.

In narrative, subunits are commonly designated by the movement from one scene to another, and are marked by standard transitional phrases, the introduction of a new character, or a sudden change in the course of events.

⁸A.J. Hauser and R. Gregory, *From Carmel to Horeb: Elijah in Crisis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990) 11-82.

In the Jephthah stories in Judg. 11:1-12:7, "After a while" (11:4), "Then he sent" (11:12), "Then the Spirit of the Lord came" (11:29), and, "Then he came" (11:34) are transitional phrases used to begin new scenes. The introduction of the Ammonites (11:4), the king of the Ammonites (11:12), the spirit of the Lord (11:29), Jephthah's daughter (11:34), and the Ephraimites (12:1) are examples of the injection of a new character to denote a change in the course of events. The introduction of Jephthah's celebrating daughter (11:34) and the angry Ephraimites (12:1) add a surprise turn in the course of events. As is the case with integrating devices, the range of possibilities regarding means for dividing a literary piece into subunits is limited only by the imagination of the writer.

As the subunits follow one another, they frequently build to a climax as the main literary piece nears its end. For example, Amos 1-2 concludes by stressing the sin and punishment of Israel in 2:6-16. The climax is heightened not only by the considerable lengthening of the words against Israel in comparison to the words against the other foreign nations, but also by the modification and elongation of the common doom oracle format. The text of the oracle against Israel begins with three verses (6-8) delineating the sins of Israel, as opposed to the single verse used to describe the sins of the other nations (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4). To prepare better for the word of punishment, the text then reminds Israel of the punishment of her predecessor the Amorite (v.9) and of her deliverance by Yahweh from Egypt (v.10). Using the concept of the Nazirite as a transition, the writer adds other offenses Israel has committed against Yahweh (vv.11-12). The oracle concludes with a word of punishment that is four verses long (13-16), as compared to the other words of doom, the longest of which are only two verses in length (1:4-5, 7-8, 14-15; 2:1-2).

A form critic might argue that 2:6-16 really does not fit the pattern of a doom oracle, both because of its length and because of the atypical nature of some of its components. A rhetorical critic is likely to see vv.6-16 as an expansion of the doom oracle format, the standard pattern having been modified and augmented in order to provide 1:3-2:16 with an effective climax that emphatically describes the extraordinary guilt of Israel and the severity of her impending punishment. As noted above, a rhetorical critic is not so much interested in the regularity of a form as in the modification of the form to suit the needs of the particular passage being studied.

Another example of the way a rhetorical critic will study the devices used to build a passage to a climax is provided by Judges 5. The writer, who has furnished several brief units (vv.19-21, 22, 23) which present different images of the battle, moves to the consequences of Israel's victory in the two longer scenes (vv.24-27, 28-30) which precede the concluding word of praise to Yahweh (v.31). Both scenes are domestic and focus on women, the cunning Jael in vv.24-27, and the greedy mother of Sisera and her ladies in vv.28-30. Although seemingly quiet scenes compared to the

fury of the battlefield, both provide a powerful cathartic experience for the reader, who is able thereby to vent anger against the hated Canaanites and to savor Israel's victory. Verses 24-27 present Israel's enemy Sisera as a defeated warrior who is lured into trusting the woman Jael and then humiliated and killed. The onomatopoeic, staccato repetition of words in vv.26-27 during Jael's blows and Sisera's prolonged fall to the floor of her tent provides the audience an opportunity to relish the fall of its enemy, since the fall of Sisera clearly embodies the fall of the Canaanites. The second cathartic experience comes in v.30, where Sisera's mother and her ladies ease their fears over Sisera's delay in returning by foolishly gloating over the spoils they anticipate receiving. Since this scene follows immediately after the picture of the defeated Sisera lying on the floor of Jael's tent with his head crushed, the juxtaposition of the two scenes allows Israel to enjoy the victory further by seeing Sisera's mother mocked. She goes on unrealistically hoping to plunder Israel one more time even when she should have realized that her son had lost. The audience is thereby provided an opportunity to rejoice that the Canaanites were not able to vandalize Israel once again (cf. v.19). Thus, in vv.24-30 one sees the larger literary unit successfully brought to a climax through the skillful use of irony, two seemingly low-profile, domestic scenes which nevertheless unleash and satisfy powerful emotions, and the degrading of two hated enemies in rapid succession.⁹

The Song of Deborah may also serve as an example of the way a rhetorical critic allows the particularities of the text to stand and be judged on their own merits. Numerous studies have proposed substantial emendations to the text of Judges 5 in order to achieve regularity of parallelism and meter, as if the poet were operating under a set of guidelines rigorously imposed by the literary mores of the poet's culture.¹⁰ These studies fail to recognize the literary creativity of ancient Israelite writers. The poet of Judges 5 did, in fact, exercise considerable artistic skill in varying customary poetic patterns in order to present a more effective piece of poetry (e.g., v.27). Typically, rhetorical critics prefer to see if patterns in the biblical text as received can work as part of an overall literary structure.

Another factor to be considered in a literary analysis is the oral orientation of ancient literary units. In a world in which few persons could read but almost all could listen, any literary artist had to operate under the assumption that most persons were likely to hear the artist's work, rather than to see it before them as a text. This meant that writers had to pay close

⁹A.J. Hauser, "Judges 5: Parataxis in Hebrew Poetry," *JBL* 99 (1980) 23-41; id., "Two Songs of Victory: A Comparison of Exodus 15 and Judges 5," *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (ed. E.R. Follis; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1987) 274-79.

¹⁰I have provided examples in "Parataxis," 23-25.

attention to the oral and aural aspects of their literature. The 20th century western world instinctively thinks of literature in terms of a printed page, and it therefore is easy for scholars to overlook the spoken element when the Old Testament is studied. Reading the text aloud can often reveal features that would otherwise go unnoticed by a scholarly community so heavily oriented to the printed page.

Rhetorical critics have also, in recent years, recognized the significance of the reader's response to the text. A text cannot convey meaning without a reader or audience to perceive it. Over the centuries any biblical text has been exposed to a wide variety of readers, whose different cultural, religious, and intellectual backgrounds have led to different understandings of the text. Even a contemporary reader who makes every attempt to learn the literary conventions and style of ancient Israelite writing and to use that knowledge as a basis for understanding the text will still, unavoidably, bring a substantial amount of the reader's own background into the text. The "meaning" of the text thus will be, of necessity, a combination of the signals sent out by the text and the inclination of the reader to respond to certain of those signals.

These discussions illustrate the types of issues a rhetorical critic will consider when studying the literary character of a text. The units of text chosen as examples have not been extensive, in order that the discussion of these examples not get unduly long, but similar examples could be provided from substantially longer units of text, including even whole books, such as Jonah¹¹ or Joshua.¹² There are, of course, many other literary devices in addition to those already mentioned which can play into a rhetorical critic's analysis. Chiastic structures often help to tie a unit of text together, whether it be the tightly-structured chiasm found in many examples of Hebrew poetry, or a chiastic structure which helps give form and unity to a piece of narrative. Acrostics can provide a structuring device, as in a number of psalms. More localized literary devices can also be important for understanding a text. Examples would be word play, anaphora, *inclusio*, metonymy, and alliteration. In narrative, a rhetorical critic will study the development of character, the articulation of plot, items that the writer chose to omit or ignore, the way dialogue is used in some cases and bypassed in others, and the pace at which a particular narrative moves. The critic will pay close attention to the frequent tendency of ancient Israelite writers to be concise and implicit rather than wordy and explicit (except where it suited their purpose). These lists of literary features to be studied are not

¹¹A.J. Hauser, "Jonah: In Pursuit of the Dove," *JBL* 104 (1985) 21-37.

¹²L.D. Hawk, *Every Promise Fulfilled: Contesting Plots in Joshua* (LCBIS; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1991).

inclusive. The key point is that a rhetorical critic will basically do two things in studying a unit of text: analyze the literary features of the text, to the maximum extent possible, from the perspective of literary style discernible in the works of ancient Israelite writers; and articulate the impact of the literary unit on its audience.

4. *Comments on Selected Works in the Bibliography*

It will be possible to discuss only a few important works. Some are significant because of when they appeared, some because of the impact they had. I have also commented briefly on some of the more important collections of essays.

James Muilenburg's Presidential Address to the Society of Biblical Literature in 1968 pointed in a new direction. In it, Muilenburg called for biblical scholars to move beyond employing only a form-critical approach to the text, encouraging them to broaden the scope of their vision to include the various literary features which present the particular character of a specific text. Muilenburg certainly recognized the value of form criticism's analysis of common, recurrent elements in a specific literary form, but he wanted scholars also to look at the particularities that make each text a unique literary expression. His call signalled the beginning of a significant shift in scholarly perspective, which has been gaining momentum for more than 20 years. Muilenburg himself may not have recognized the full impact of his words, especially since he was reacting primarily to the problems he saw in form criticism. Nevertheless, his urging scholars to study carefully the numerous literary details of specific texts helped nudge many of them away from the perspectives of source and form criticism. One needs to be careful not to dichotomize this shift too strongly, since source and form critics do pay attention to literary features in texts, and most rhetorical critics do have an interest in the life and beliefs of ancient Israel. Nevertheless, Muilenburg's call came at a time in the history of biblical scholarship when the tide was ready to turn toward an emphasis on the study of the literary artistry found in biblical texts.

Prior to Muilenburg's address, biblical scholars had not displayed much interest in literary analysis. Two exceptions in the 1960's were: L. Alonso Schokel's *Estudios de Poetica Hebrea*, published in 1963,¹³ and E.M. Good's intriguing book *Irony in the Old Testament*, published in 1965.¹⁴

¹³Barcelona: Juan Flors.

¹⁴Philadelphia: Westminster. One should perhaps also mention R.G. Moulton's *The Literary Study of the Bible: An Account of the Leading Forms of Literature Represented in the Sacred Writings* (Boston: Heath, 1899). Moulton treated a number of features of biblical literature, including the various types of literature displayed in the Bible, but for decades biblical scholars showed little interest in pursuing what Moulton had begun.

There were, however, others from outside the academy who recognized the quality of literature contained in the Bible. I will mention one scholar who wrote briefly but powerfully about the highly-artistic character of biblical narrative: Erich Auerbach, whose book *Mimesis* was published in 1953.¹⁵ In contrasting Homeric epic with what he calls the "equally epic style" of Old Testament prose, Auerbach focused on the terseness of biblical narrative style, on its tendency to be "fraught with background," and its presentation of multilayered characters about whom much is implicit rather than explicit.¹⁶ Auerbach had a strong sensitivity for the ability of biblical narrative to draw the reader into the text by leaving implicit many elements of plot, character, and motivation. In Auerbach's opinion, the terseness of biblical narrative was evidence of its highly-developed literary style, since so much was conveyed with an economy of words. One may disagree with Auerbach's generalization that biblical narrative is terse and implicit, both because his observations are based on so few examples, and because not all biblical narrative is as terse and implicit as Auerbach suggested. Nevertheless, Auerbach's brief treatment of the literary character of biblical narrative went substantially beyond anything taking place in biblical scholarship in the 1950s, and helped call attention to the skilled literary artistry of the biblical writers.

In 1974 a number of Muilenburg's students published a volume titled *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*,¹⁷ missing by a few days the opportunity to present a copy to Muilenburg before his death. Even though the volume, edited by J.J. Jackson and M. Kessler, contained some articles not specifically oriented toward the development of rhetorical criticism, in it a number of scholars worked to define the course that rhetorical criticism would take and the types of questions with which it would deal. Several contributors to this volume played a leading role in the subsequent development of rhetorical criticism.

The two volumes titled *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* (1974 and 1982), edited by K.R.R. Gros Louis and others,¹⁸ presented literary interpretations of selected biblical narratives in a style and format easily accessible to the lay reader. While the first volume did not have a sufficiently broad representation of writers (10 of the 18 articles were written by Gros Louis), it was a significant attempt to apply basic methods of literary analysis to biblical narratives.

¹⁵Trans. W.R. Trask; Princeton: Princeton University.

¹⁶See Auerbach's excellent discussion on pages 7-23.

¹⁷Pittsburg Theological Monograph Series 1; Pittsburg: Pickwick.

¹⁸New York: Abingdon.

Beginning in the mid 1970s, several important works were published by biblical scholars who devoted an entire volume to the literary analysis of biblical texts. J.P. Fokkelman's *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis* appeared in 1975¹⁹ as an extensive literary treatment of ancient Hebrew prose in Genesis, paying particular attention to themes that run throughout the various narratives. While at times one feels that Fokkelman may be deriving more from the text than is there, his literary analysis is thorough, insightful, and provocative. In 1981 Fokkelman published a second volume of detailed literary analysis, focusing on II Samuel. *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistics and Structural Analysis. Volume I: King David (II Samuel 9-20 & I Kings 1-2)* is a meticulous treatment of the so-called "Court Narrative" of King David.²⁰ Five years later P. Miscall published *I Samuel: A Literary Reading*,²¹ in which he "departs from historical criticism and associated methods and disciplines, because they do regard and treat the Old Testament as simplistic and primitive."²² Miscall thus presents a literary reading of I Samuel which intentionally bypasses historical criticism's presuppositions and methods.

Two University of Sheffield scholars, D.J.A. Clines and D.M. Gunn, also directed their attention toward the literary analysis of biblical texts. Clines' *The Theme of the Pentateuch* (1978)²³ focused on the unity of the Pentateuch. He voiced his concern that previous scholarship had broken the Pentateuch into numerous small components, thereby obscuring its literary unity. Clines was one of the first literary scholars to question some of the presuppositions and results of historical criticism. Gunn published *The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation* in 1978, and *The Fate of King Saul* in 1980.²⁴ Both works paid close attention to the literary structure and details of the narratives, and skillfully demonstrated the intricate workings of the dynamics of biblical narrative.

In 1979 M. Fishbane published *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Texts*,²⁵ in which he provided a detailed literary analysis of selected biblical texts. Fishbane did not discuss in detail a method of literary criticism, but rather demonstrated his method through the interpretations he presented, with special emphasis on stylistic conventions and on the interaction between reader and text. He examined narratives and narrative

¹⁹Amsterdam: Van Gorcum.

²⁰Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum.

²¹Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.

²²*I Samuel: A Literary Reading*, vii.

²³Sheffield: Sheffield Academic.

²⁴Both published by Sheffield Academic.

²⁵New York: Schocken.

cycles from Genesis and Exodus, speeches and prayers from several different books, and two motifs that run throughout the Bible, the "Eden" motif and the "exodus" motif.

In the same year the Israeli scholar S. Bar-Efrat published, in Hebrew, an extensive treatment of narrative in the Tanak. Sheffield Press subsequently published (in 1989) an English translation of the second Hebrew edition (1984) of his work, titled *Narrative Art in the Bible*.²⁶ Bar-Efrat's systematic treatment of narrative techniques in the Hebrew Bible provides an excellent guide to the basics of narrative style in ancient Israel. His work contains chapters on the narrator, characters, plot, time and space, and narrative style. Bar-Efrat treats specific pieces of biblical narrative in order to illustrate the techniques he discusses, and ends his work with a detailed analysis of the Amnon and Tamar story in II Samuel 13.

In 1981 R. Alter published *The Art of Biblical Narrative*.²⁷ This work is significant because in it a literary critic who had published extensively outside the sphere of biblical scholarship presented an overview of key literary features of biblical narrative. Alter's intimate acquaintance with the Hebrew text of the Tanak enabled him to bridge the gap between his literary training and the subtleties of the biblical text. His work paralleled nicely the studies of those already working in rhetorical criticism, and made a strong case for the highly-skilled literary artistry practiced by the biblical writers. In his subsequent work *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, published in 1985,²⁸ Alter did not attempt to expound all the intricacies and genres of biblical poetry, but rather to show how biblical poets artfully conveyed their messages through the skillful employment of the poetic conventions of their time.

A year after Alter's work on biblical narrative appeared, N. Frye published *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*.²⁹ Frye, a prominent literary critic well-known for his analysis of non-biblical literature, chose to emphasize the Bible's unity and focus on major themes that pervade biblical literature. Unlike Alter, Frye does not display the sensitivity for the nuances of the text of the Tanak that comes with an intimate knowledge of Hebrew. Nevertheless, his creative interpretation helped augment the growing interest in literary analysis of the Bible.

In 1982 a second volume of essays by scholars working in rhetorical criticism was published, titled *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature*.³⁰ Most of the articles in this volume, edited by D.J.A. Clines,

²⁶Trans. D. Shefer-Vanson.

²⁷New York: Basic Books.

²⁸New York: Basic Books.

²⁹New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

³⁰Sheffield: Sheffield Academic.

D.M. Gunn, and A.J. Hauser, came from the work of the Rhetorical Criticism Section of the Society of Biblical Literature. In these pages one can see the growing response to Muilenburg's call for close attention to the literary characteristics of particular biblical texts. The volume also makes it clear that rhetorical criticism does not focus only on stylistics, as is sometimes claimed,³¹ but rather on all the important literary features of the text being studied.

In 1980, students and friends of William A. Beardslee presented him with a *Festschrift* titled *Orientation by Disorientation: Studies in Literary Criticism and Biblical Literary Criticism*.³² As its title suggests, this volume, edited by R.A. Spencer, deals with the thorny issue of how to integrate literary analysis of biblical texts with more traditional historical-critical methods. There are a number of articles focusing on theoretical issues, followed by a series of articles on particular texts or literary categories in the Bible. This volume treats practically but thoroughly some of the key issues revolving around the movement of literary analysis into the mainstream of biblical scholarship.

The Israeli scholar M. Sternberg published *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* in 1985.³³ Sternberg was already recognized for his work in literary theory and analysis, and had previously published a number of essays on biblical narrative. His book provided extensive examples of various stylistic features of biblical narrative, including the use of perspective, the structure of repetition, the development of character, etc. Like Auerbach, Sternberg paid close attention to the skillful use of gaps and ambiguities in a story. He argued that narrative in the Tanak cannot be characterized as either history or fiction, but rather as a unique artistry designed to convey the ideology of the ancient Israelite writers. Sternberg's treatment is thorough, but one wonders if Sternberg does not, like Fokkelman, at times squeeze more out of a text than may be there.

In 1987 R. Alter and F. Kermode edited *The Literary Guide to the Bible*.³⁴ This collection of essays by a number of well-known literary

³¹While occasionally rhetorical criticism of the Old Testament is defined in a more limited sense as the study of stylistics, that is, of stylistic devices employed in the text (Dozeman ["Rhetorical Criticism," 713-15] at times appears to presume such a definition), such a limiting of rhetorical criticism seriously misperceives what rhetorical critics are about, and hardly seems appropriate to what Muilenburg was seeking. Studying the stylistic devices used in a text is a necessary factor in a complete literary analysis, but hardly a sufficient factor. Rhetorical critics deal extensively with stylistic features in order to provide a springboard for a thorough, well-rounded literary analysis of the text being studied. Studying stylistics alone would isolate the rhetorical critic from the dynamic life of the text.

³²Pittsburgh: Pickwick.

³³Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature: Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.

³⁴London: Collins.

scholars presented the lay reader with a basic treatment of the literary artistry of the Bible. The publication of this volume indicated the momentum that literary analysis of the Bible had gained by the mid 1980s.

Two recent works specifically focused on rhetoric appeared in 1990. The first, *The Bible as Rhetoric: Studies in Biblical Persuasion and Credibility*, was edited by the philosopher M. Warner.³⁵ It takes an interdisciplinary, theoretical approach to rhetoric in the Bible, presenting articles by philosophers, literary critics, theologians, and historians of ideas in addition to those by biblical scholars. As the brief preface to the book notes, the papers it presents "explore the ways in which the persuasive strategies employed in the biblical text relate (both positively and negatively) to their preoccupations with religious and historical truth."³⁶ Due to its interdisciplinary focus, this volume raises thought-provoking issues regarding the functioning of rhetoric and the way it conveys meaning.

The second work to appear in 1990 is *Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation*, by D. Patrick and A. Scult.³⁷ This collaborative work explores the power of the text to influence not only the audience to whom it was originally addressed, but also the various audiences who have encountered it in subsequent ages. Patrick and Scult critique Alter's focusing so strongly on the Bible as great literature, arguing that it also embodies "a great spiritual vision.... The interpreter must somehow engage the spiritual and theological truth claims of the Biblical text in order to understand it rightly."³⁸ They define rhetoric as "the means by which a text establishes and manages its relationship to its audience in order to achieve a particular effect."³⁹ This volume discusses theoretical issues in considerable detail, but the theory is interwoven with numerous examples, and there are also chapters presenting detailed studies of particular texts, such as Job and the creation story in Genesis 1-3.

Many other specific works, and the work of many other scholars, could (and ought to be) discussed at this point, but space limits me to what has been said. For another perspective on issues and works presented here, the reader may wish to consult P.R. House's article, "The Rise and Current Status of Literary Criticism of the Old Testament." House's article introduces a volume of reprinted essays on Old Testament Literary Criticism.⁴⁰

³⁵Warwick Studies in Philosophy and Literature; London: Routledge.

³⁶*The Bible as Rhetoric*, i.

³⁷Sheffield: Sheffield Academic.

³⁸*Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation*, 18.

³⁹*Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation*, 12.

⁴⁰In his *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 3-22.

The basic purpose of this volume is to present a comprehensive bibliography, and to that we now turn. Needless to say, a bibliography such as this cannot be exhaustive, especially since a great deal of work continues to be done. While I have made every effort to make the bibliography as encompassing as possible, no doubt some important works will have been omitted, and I extend my apologies beforehand to those whose work I have inadvertently overlooked. Some works, due to their content, needed to be listed under two different headings in the bibliography. Section IV is perhaps a bit unorthodox, but seemed a reasonable way to group references. I welcome suggestions regarding works that should be included in this bibliography in the event a second edition is published.

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2. The Pentateuch

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PART II

RHETORICAL CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Duane F. Watson

NOTES ON HISTORY AND METHOD

The following are notes on the history and method of rhetorical criticism of the New Testament. They include sections on the origins and history of rhetorical criticism of the New Testament; contemporary methodologies using ancient rhetoric, modern rhetoric, or both; and current issues in rhetorical criticism of the Gospels and Epistles.

This discussion is not exhaustive, but is a means of introducing the bibliography of materials published to date. It partially assesses where rhetorical criticism has been and where it is currently, and acts the prophet to predict where it may be going. The bibliography itself will provide the researcher with the full range of available sources for further and more thorough professional study.

1. A Brief History

Rhetorical criticism of the New Testament has been steadily gaining acceptance and momentum in the last few decades. It is built on many predecessors which, when examined, help us understand the current phenomenon. With few exceptions, especially since the turn of this century, rhetorical criticism has been largely limited to matters of style, such as figures of speech and thought. Also, this enterprise has focused primarily upon the Pauline epistles to the neglect of the Gospels and Catholic Epistles.¹

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) was a teacher of rhetoric. His work *De Doctrina Christiana* (Book 4) uses Cicero's *De Inventione* and *Orator* to describe the duties of an orator, and then applies these to the Bible and the preaching of the church. He finds the rhetoric of the Bible not that of paganism, but of another equally qualitative variety suited to its authors and the importance of the subject matter. He uses rhetoric to describe Paul's letters, particularly regarding style, and found them to uphold classical stan-

¹For the history of rhetorical criticism of the New Testament in general, see D.F. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter* (SBLDS 104; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988) 1-8; id., "Rhetorical Criticism," *ISBE* 4.181-82; B.L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (GBS; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 9-17; R. Meynet, "Histoire de 'l'analyse rhétorique' en exégèse biblique," *Rhetorica* 8 (1990) 291-312; W. Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism and its Theory in Culture-Critical Perspective: The Narrative Rhetoric of John 11," *Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament* (eds. P.J. Hartin and J.H. Petzer; NTTs 15; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991); S.M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS 134; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992) ch. 1.

dards.² For example, 2 Corinthians is viewed as a *refutatio* aimed at charges of opponents (4.7.12). The Venerable Bede, the English biblical scholar (c. 673-735), analyzed figures and tropes in both Testaments in his *De schematibus et tropis*. Unfortunately he did not discuss invention and arrangement, thus virtually equating rhetoric with style.³

The rhetoric of Paul was a focus of the Reformers. One influence upon several of the Reformers, especially Luther, was the work of the Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla (c. 1406-57). He wrote *Collatio Novi Testamenti* which, while critically comparing the Vulgate and Greek New Testaments, provides some rhetorical analysis.⁴ Of special note during the Reformation is the important contribution of Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560). He wrote rhetorical commentaries on Romans and Galatians utilizing classical conventions of invention, arrangement, and style, as well as more modern conceptions of these.⁵ Classen remarks that among his contemporary Reformers "it seems fair to say that no one contributed more to the development of rhetorical criticism than Melanchthon."⁶ Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1469-1536) provided rhetorical analyses of 1 and 2 Corinthians in his *Paraphrasis in duas epistolas Pauli ad Corinthios*.⁷ John Calvin (1509-64), besides noting rhetorical features (particularly stylistic) throughout his

²On *Christian Doctrine* (trans. D.W. Robertson, Jr.; The Library of Liberal Arts; Indianapolis, IL: Bobbs Merrill, 1958); G.A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1980) 149-60.

³"Bede's *De schematibus et tropis*- A Translation" (trans. G.H. Tannenhaus) *QJS* 48 (1962) 237-53; repr., *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric* (eds. J.M. Miller et al; Bloomington and London: Indiana University, 1973) 96-122.

⁴Ed. A. Perosa; Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, Studi e Testi, i; Florence, 1970. This is a published version of the later *Laurentii Vallensis...in Latinam Novi testamentii interpretationem... Adnotationes apprime utiles* (Paris, 1505). This source is cited by C.J. Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric" (unpublished paper presented at the Conference on Rhetorical Criticism of Biblical Documents, Heidelberg, Germany, July 1992) 11, n. 41 (an expanded version of his "Paulus und die Antike Rhetorik," *ZNW* 82 [1991] 1-32).

⁵*Commentarii in epistolam ad Romanos hoc anno M.D.XL. recogniti et locupletati* (Argentorati, apud C. Mylium, 1540). This source is cited by H.D. Betz, "The Problem of Rhetoric and Theology According to the Apostle Paul," *L'apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style et conception du ministère* (ed. A. Vanhoye; BETL 73; Leuven: Leuven University, 1986) 17, n. 5. See also Classen, "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik"; id., "St. Paul's Epistles," 5-11; R. Schäfer, "Melanchthon's Hermeneutik im Römerbrief-Kommentar von 1532," *ZTK* 60 (1963) 216-35.

⁶"St. Paul's Epistles," 11.

⁷Louanii, n.p., 1519. Cited by Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," 17.

commentaries on the New Testament,⁸ gives a rhetorical analysis of Romans in his *In omnes D. Pauli Novi Testamenti Epistolas, atque etiā in Epistolā ad Hebraeos commentaria luculentissima*.⁹

Classen states, "Conscientious study of the history of biblical exegesis shows that the application of rhetorical categories never ceased entirely."¹⁰ After the Reformation there are just a few works of note until Germany became the center of rhetorical analysis of the New Testament in the late 18th to early 20th centuries. Important in this stream of tradition is Karl Ludwig Bauer's massive study of Paul's use of classical rhetorical techniques, entitled *Rhetoricae Paullinae, vel, Quid oratorium sit in oratione Paulli*.¹¹ In a doctoral dissertation at Utrecht entitled *Disputatio inauguralis De altera Pauli ad Corinthios epistola, et observanda in illa apostoli indole et oratione...*, Hermannus Joannes Royaards provides a section on Paul's rhetoric and analyzes other works on this subject.¹² The German lexicographer Christian Gottlob Wilke wrote *Die neutestamentliche Rhetorik: Ein Seitenstück zur Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms* which is concerned with the stylistic features, sentence structure, and argumentation of the New Testament.¹³ Friedrich Wilhelm Blass discusses rhetoric in the New Testament in his *Die Rhythmen der asianischen und römischen Kunstprosa*.¹⁴

In *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI. Jahrhundert vor Christus in die Zeit der Renaissance*,¹⁵ E. Norden surveys rhetorical prose from the sixth century B.C. to the Renaissance, and includes a discussion of New Testament rhetoric. He measured the Pauline epistles according to the classical canons of artistic prose style and found them unhellenic. However, he did concede that the epistles had rhetorical impact from the use of rhetorical devices like antithesis and repetition. Norden attacked Wilke and Blass for approaching the New Testament with rhetorical categories. He also attacked C.F.G. Heinrici who used a rhetorical approach in his commentary

⁸See W.J. Bouwsma, *Calvinism as Theologia Rhetorica* (with responses) (ed. W. Wuellner; Center for Hermeneutical Studies, Protocol of the Fifth-Fourth Colloquy: 28 September 1986; Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1987) 1-21.

⁹Genevae, apud I. Gerardum, 1551. Cited by Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," 17-18. See also B. Girardin, *Rhétorique et théologie: Calvin, Le commentaire de l'Épître aux Romains* (ThH 54; Paris: Beauchesne, 1979).

¹⁰"St. Paul's Epistles," 11.

¹¹2 vols.; Halae: Impensis Orphanotrophei, 1782.

¹²(Trajecti ad Rhenum, J. Altheer, 1818) 99-152. Cited by Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," 18.

¹³Dresden & Leipzig: Arnold, 1843.

¹⁴Leipzig: Deichert (Böhme), 1905.

¹⁵2 vols.; Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1898.

on 2 Corinthians.¹⁶ In the second edition of this commentary on 2 Corinthians, Heinrici supplied an appendix, entitled "Zum Hellenismus des Paulus," which refutes Norden and considers Paul's style to be an individual product of the blending of hellenism and Judaism and his own religious experience.¹⁷ Many scholars sided against Norden and he retracted much of his criticism in an appendix to his *Die antike Kunstprosa*.¹⁸ However, his original assessment about rhetoric's relationship to the New Testament remained dominant. Norden also published *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur formengeschichte religiöser Rede* which contains several studies of the rhetoric of the New Testament.¹⁹ In the midst of this debate, Eduard König provided an encyclopedia of rhetorical features of the Bible along with parallels in classical literature in his *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die biblische Literatur*.²⁰

Johannes Weiss (1863-1914) wrote "Beiträge zur paulinischen Rhetorik"²¹ and *Die Aufgaben der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft in der Gegenwart*.²² In these works he assumes that the epistles contained oratorical features because they were written for public reading, and he evaluates the rhetoric of the Pauline epistles accordingly. He particularly focuses on sentence structure, style, and rhetorical devices, especially parallelism. Rudolf Bultmann, a doctoral student of Weiss, wrote a dissertation entitled, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*.²³ He examines the Pauline epistles for features of the Cynic-Stoic diatribe and found numerous similarities with popular philosophical literature. He concluded that Paul was functioning like a Cynic street preacher and thus maintains that Paul's epistles were from a low level

¹⁶*Das zweite Sendschreiben des Apostels Paulus an die Korinther* (Berlin: Hertz, 1887). Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, 2.474-75, 493ff.

¹⁷*Der zweite Brief an die Korinther, mit einem Anhang* (8th ed; MeyerK 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900) 436-58.

¹⁸Vol. 2: Nachträge, 3-4. On Norden and Heinrici, I rely upon Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," 18-19; id., *2 Corinthians 8 & 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* (ed. George W. MacRae; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 129, n. 2.

¹⁹4th ed.; Leipzig/Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1923; repr., 1956.

²⁰Leipzig: Theodor Weicher, 1900.

²¹*Theologische Studien. Herrn Wirk. Oberkonsistorialrath Professor D. Bernhard Weiss zu seinem 70. Geburtstage dargebracht* (eds. C.R. Gregory et al; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897) 165-247.

²²Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1908.

²³FRLANT 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910; repr., 1984.

of rhetorical culture.²⁴ Hans Windisch, another doctoral student of Weiss, uses rhetorical insights of Weiss to write his *Der zweite Korintherbrief*.²⁵

Turning to England momentarily, John Jebb wrote *Sacred Literature*²⁶ which analyzes the style and structure of the New Testament, including parallelism, synonymy, antithesis, and climax. E.W. Bullinger defined and classified the majority of the rhetorical figures of speech and thought in both the Old and New Testament in his *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*.²⁷

Since this important stream of tradition from the turn of the century (mainly from Germany) New Testament studies became isolated from rhetoric. Factors contributing to this isolation have been variously identified.²⁸ Generally this was also the time that rhetoric was being dropped or limited in the school curricula of the Western world where it had held sway from Greco-Roman times. By the end of the nineteenth century rhetoric was truncated and had come to be understood as mere style or ornament, that is, form had been separated from content. More specific influences in this isolation process include the judgment of Adolf Deissmann and others that the works of the New Testament, particularly the Pauline epistles, were "non-literary" and thus not written in league with Greco-Roman literary culture.²⁹ Another was the negative assessment of Norden about the same time as the rise of the history of religion school which changed the focus of New Testament studies.³⁰

Only 30 years ago this isolation of New Testament studies from rhetoric was so complete that it could be confidently stated, "He [Paul] positively rejected the artful literary and rhetorical devices of the 'wise of this age'... The same is true of other parts of the NT... There are echoes of oratory and of orators here and there, but no studied imitation."³¹ The isolation was not complete, however. There are notable exceptions like the study of chiasmus by N. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament*,³² and the response by J.

²⁴*Stil*, 2-3.

²⁵MeyerK 6; 9th ed.; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924; repr., ed. Georg Strecker, 1970.

²⁶London: A. and R. Spottiswoode, 1820.

²⁷London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968.

²⁸They are discussed in Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," 19-21; Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 9-12; Poglouff, *Logos and Sophia*, 15-22.

²⁹*Bible Studies* (trans. Alexander Grieve; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901) 3-59; id., *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (trans. W. Wilson; 2nd ed.; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1926) 27-52; 144-45; id., *Light From the Ancient East* (trans. L.R.M. Strachan; New York: Doran, 1927) 233-51; Poglouff, *Logos and Sophia*, 16-19.

³⁰Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," 19-20.

³¹F.C. Grant, "Rhetoric and Oratory," *IDB* 4.76-77.

³²Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1942; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992.

Jeremias, "Chiasmus in den Paulusbriefen."³³ Consider also the study of Pauline antithesis by N. Schneider, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*.³⁴ However, as these studies indicate, New Testament rhetoric was studied mainly from the perspective of style, neglecting the more substantial aspects of invention and arrangement. Even the prophetic call to study the rhetoric of the New Testament by W. Jennrich in his 1948 article, "Classical Rhetoric in the New Testament," was limited to analyzing style, particularly in the Pauline epistles.³⁵

In the last three decades rhetorical criticism of the New Testament has experienced a revival.³⁶ Many reasons have been given for this renewed interest.³⁷ One is dissatisfaction with form and redaction criticism, and an accompanying investigation of rhetoric from a scientific perspective in the fields of the humanities, philosophy, and classics.³⁸ Of particular note is the work of Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *La Nouvelle Rhétorique: Traité l'argumentation*,³⁹ which conceptualizes rhetoric as argumentation and persuasion (not just style), stresses the importance of the rhetorical situation for argumentation and social history, and emphasizes that all speech is rhetorical.⁴⁰

The work of Amos Wilder and Robert Funk helped spur this revival. Wilder has even been called "the father of rhetorical analysis."⁴¹ In his

³³ZNW 49 (1958) 145-56; also in an expanded version (by C. Burchard) in his *Abba: Studien zur neutestamentlichen Theologie und Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966) 276-90.

³⁴HUT 11; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1970.

³⁵CJ 44 (1948) 30-32.

³⁶For the current situation in rhetorical criticism, see V.K. Robbins and J.H. Patton, "Rhetoric and Biblical Criticism," *QJS* 66 (1980) 327-50; W. Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?," *CBQ* 49 (1987) 448-63; C.C. Black, "Rhetorical Questions: The New Testament, Classical Rhetoric, and Current Interpretation," *Dialog* 29 (1990) 62-70; id., "Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation," *ExpTim* 100 (1989) 252-58; id., "Rhetorical Criticism and the New Testament," *PEGLMBS* 8 (1988) 77-92; J. Lambrecht, "Rhetorical Criticism and the New Testament," *Bij* 50 (1989) 239-53; J. Botha, "On the 'Reinvention' of Rhetoric," *Scriptura* 31 (1989) 14-31; B. Fiore, "Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism: NT Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism," *ABD* 5.715-19; W. Wuellner, "Biblical Exegesis in the Light of the History and Historicity of Rhetoric" (unpublished paper presented at the Conference on Rhetorical Criticism of Biblical Documents, Heidelberg, Germany, July 1992).

³⁷They are discussed in Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," 19-21; Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 9-17.

³⁸Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," 20-21.

³⁹Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958; ET: *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (trans. J. Wilkinson and P. Weaver; Notre Dame: Notre Dame University, 1969).

⁴⁰Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 14-17.

⁴¹Robbins and Patton, "Rhetoric and Biblical Criticism," 328.

book, *The Language of the Gospel: Early Christian Rhetoric*,⁴² Wilder recognizes the rhetorical qualities of literary forms and genres, that they reveal the social-historical setting and exigence which produced them. Robert Funk, in his *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God*,⁴³ stresses the similarity between letters and oral communication, that letters were like structured speech. He states, "The letter...is an appropriate substitute for oral word- it is as near oral speech as possible- yet it provides a certain distance on the proclamation as event."⁴⁴ Careful analysis of this rhetoric provides an understanding of the author's thought. About this same time E.A. Judge wrote a far-sighted article, entitled "Paul's Boasting in Relation to Contemporary Professional Practice," in which he asks to what extent Paul received rhetorical training and called for the systematic analysis of the rhetoric of the New Testament.⁴⁵

A major turning point for reintroducing rhetorical criticism to biblical studies was J. Muilenburg's presidential address to the Society of Biblical Literature in 1968.⁴⁶ He urged the biblical field to move beyond form criticism which he found limited by its emphasis upon convention, the typical, and the representative to the neglect of the individual, unique, and artistic. He saw rhetorical criticism as an alternative to form criticism's aversion to placing a pericope in an historical context. He even laid down a rudimentary methodology.

The reintroduction of rhetorical criticism to New Testament studies in particular occurred when Testament books were analyzed in their entirety as rhetorical discourses. H.D. Betz's work on Galatians was a major early influence. He presented a paper, entitled "The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians," to the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas in 1974 and subsequently published it under the same title.⁴⁷ He argued that Paul's epistles were composed with classical categories of invention, arrangement, and style in mind and these could be used as an interpretive tool. Galatians was identified as an "apologetic letter" using judicial rhetoric common to courts of law. Betz followed his observations with a commentary on Galatians which works out this thesis, entitled *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in*

⁴²New York: Harper and Row, 1964; repr. with new title, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1971).

⁴³New York: Harper and Row, 1966.

⁴⁴Funk, *Language*, 248.

⁴⁵*AusBR* 16 (1968) 37-50.

⁴⁶This address was published as "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969) 1-18.

⁴⁷*NTS* 21 (1975) 353-79.

Galatia.⁴⁸ His work on Galatians has in turn been followed by work on the Corinthian correspondence, entitled *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*.⁴⁹ 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 are identified with Greco-Roman rhetoric and epistolography as separate epistles comparable to administrative correspondence in the Hellenistic period.

Betz's work on Galatians has been criticized on several points. He classified Galatians as an apologetic letter, but subsequently many in the field have pointed out the lack of evidence for such an epistolary type and have concluded that it is essentially deliberative species of rhetoric, not judicial as apologetic is usually classified. He labels 5:1-6:10 as *exhortatio*, but this is not a recognized category of arrangement. He assumes more arrangement in the epistle than some are willing to grant is possible simply because it is an epistle. Rhetorical and epistolary theory were not integrated in antiquity (at least not in rhetorical handbooks). He also neglected stylistic matters which do inform analysis of invention and arrangement.⁵⁰

However, these criticisms are refinements on true advancement. Betz reemphasized the forgotten methodology of interpreting the Pauline epistles using Greco-Roman rhetorical and epistolary theory in their complete form, and began a new trend in commentary writing- rhetorical analysis of an entire epistle using Greco-Roman rhetoric. Following his lead, major works have appeared on Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 2 Thessalonians, and Jude and 2 Peter to name a few.⁵¹ Also, there are hundreds of articles analyzing complete books or portions of New Testament books, and these are found in the bibliography below.

Concurrent with the work of Betz is that of W. Wuellner who was also creatively introducing rhetoric into the study of the New Testament. He brought Greco-Roman and more modern rhetorical theory to bear on

⁴⁸Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979; GT: *Der Galaterbrief: Ein Kommentar zum Brief des Apostels Paulus an die Gemeinden in Galatien* (trans. S. Ann; Munich: Kaiser, 1988).

⁴⁹Ed. G.W. MacRae; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.

⁵⁰For these points, see the reviews listed in the bibliography under Galatians.

⁵¹M. Bünker, *Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition im 1.Korintherbrief* (GTA 28; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984); R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (FFNT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986); Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter*; F.W. Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric and 2 Thessalonians* (JSNTSS 30; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989); G.S. Holland, *The Tradition that You Received from Us: 2 Thessalonians in the Pauline Tradition* (HUT 24; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1988); R.N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 1990); N. Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism* (JSNTSS 45; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990); M.M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (HUT 28; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991); L.G. Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* (JSNTSS 78; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993).

Romans, arguing that the Pauline epistles should be approached primarily as argumentative and rhetorical. He demonstrated that Romans was constructed on the pattern of an ancient speech.⁵² He also identified the rhetorical structure of 1 Corinthians 13.⁵³

Although Betz provided the first detailed modern study of a New Testament book according to Greco-Roman rhetoric, he unfortunately did not provide a discussion of his methodology. G.A. Kennedy is the first to provide a methodology for rhetorical criticism of the gospels and epistles of the New Testament in his book, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*.⁵⁴ This methodology is discussed in detail below and has provided the impetus for numerous contemporary studies.

2. Contemporary Methodologies

Currently rhetorical analyses of New Testament texts exhibit a variety of methodologies. Some utilize only Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions, others only modern rhetorical conventions, and still others varying proportions of both. Even within these broad categories there is great variety. Needless to say, refinement in methodology currently occupies center stage in the discipline and will continue to do so.⁵⁵

2.1 Using Greco-Roman Rhetoric

The rhetoric of the New Testament derives from at least three broad and interconnected sources: 1) its Jewish heritage, 2) that heritage independent and dependent upon Greco-Roman rhetoric, and 3) more directly upon Greco-Roman rhetoric itself. Fortunately the latter was systematic and is preserved for us not only in written sources (speeches, letters, etc), but in rhetorical handbooks. Both can directly inform an analysis of the New Testament. Knowledge of ancient rhetorical convention helps us place the

⁵²"Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate Over Romans," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 330-51; repr., *The Romans Debate* (ed. K.P. Donfried; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977) 152-74; and (2nd ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991) 128-46.

⁵³"Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation," *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant* (eds. W.R. Schoedel and R.L. Wilken; ThH 53; Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979) 177-88.

⁵⁴Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984.

⁵⁵For an insightful discussion of methodology, see D. Stamps, "Rhetorical Criticism and the Rhetoric of New Testament Criticism," *JTL* 6 (1992) 268-79.

New Testament amidst its Greco-Roman oral and written culture, and to appreciate the role this placement can play in interpretation.⁵⁶

Rhetorical criticism of the New Testament using only Greco-Roman rhetoric is an historical enterprise. It utilizes a systematized and well-conceptualized discipline from the Greco-Roman era to analyze the New Testament. Being in league with traditional historical-critical methodologies like form and source criticisms, the situation impinging upon the writers and the readers is one of its concerns. It enables the interpreter to hear and respond to the text in a fashion akin to the original first century audience. Rhetorical criticism in this tradition thus stands between ahistorical literary criticism and historical-criticism.

This approach assumes that the writers of the New Testament were familiar with rhetoric either from formal education, or interaction with oral and written hellenistic culture which was permeated with rhetorical practice. This rhetoric is encapsulated in ancient rhetorical handbooks, school exercises, written speeches, and letters. This approach to rhetorical criticism views the biblical documents as complex, interrelated wholes, and recognizes the argumentative nature of these texts.⁵⁷

As mentioned above, the first methodology proposed using these assumptions is that of G.A. Kennedy and it is outlined in his *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (pp. 33-38). This methodology has six interrelated steps:

1. Determine the rhetorical unit, either a self-contained pericope (e.g. Farewell Discourse) or an entire book (e.g. Romans).

2. Define the rhetorical situation, that is, a situation in which the persons, events, and exigence necessitate a verbal response. The model for the rhetorical situation used is that of Lloyd Bitzer.⁵⁸

3. Determine the rhetorical problem or stasis (main question at issue) and the species of rhetoric, whether judicial (accusation and defense), deliberative (persuasion and dissuasion), or epideictic (praise and blame).

⁵⁶Greco-Roman rhetoric and its role in the New Testament is described by Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, esp. 33-38; Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style*, 8-28; Black, "Rhetorical Criticism and the New Testament"; id., "Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation"; id., "Rhetorical Questions"; Lambrecht, "Rhetorical Criticism and the New Testament"; Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 25-48; Botha, "On the 'Reinvention' of Rhetoric"; Wuellner, "Where is Rhetorical Taking Us"; Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 1-19.

⁵⁷It is not my intention to survey Greco-Roman rhetorical theory. For brief surveys, see Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style*, 8-28; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 12-33; Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 25-48. For more detailed discussions, see works in the bibliography under Greco-Roman Rhetoric: Surveys.

⁵⁸"The Rhetorical Situation," *PR* 1 (1968) 1-14. For the vigorous discussion of Bitzer's conception of the rhetorical situation, see the works in the bibliography under Modern Rhetoric: Rhetorical Situation.

These are the rhetoric of the courtroom, political forum, and public ceremony respectively.

4. Analyze the invention, arrangement, and style. Invention is argumentation by ethos, pathos, and logos. Arrangement is the ordering of the various components such as the *exordium* (introduction), *narratio* (statement of facts), *probatio* (main body), and *peroratio* (conclusion). Style is fitting the language to the needs of invention and includes such things as figures of speech and thought.

5. Evaluate the rhetorical effectiveness of the rhetorical unit in utilizing invention, arrangement, and style in meeting the exigence.

This methodology has become extremely influential as a starting point for rhetorical analysis. The first full-scale rhetorical analysis of a New Testament book utilizing Kennedy's method was D. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter*.⁵⁹ The methodology was shown to be workable and fruitful for exegesis and as a companion for historical critical enterprises like source and redaction criticism.

This historical approach to rhetorical criticism has been criticized on a number of points: 1) There is a question of the degree that rhetorical theory influenced the epistolary genre (to be discussed further below); 2) There is a question of the extent to which Greco-Roman rhetoric influenced Jewish culture by the first century A.D., and if it is rightly used in analyzing Jewish texts, particularly those from a specifically Palestinian context; 3) There has yet to be full acknowledgement of the role that Hellenistic Jewish rhetoric played in early Christian rhetoric; 4) Greco-Roman rhetorical analysis may leave peculiar features of early Christian rhetoric unappreciated or undiscovered; and 5) There is the danger of glossing over the changes rhetoric must undergo in the transition from oral to written form or from one written genre to another. Can Kennedy say, "In general, identification of genre is not a crucial factor in understanding how rhetoric actually works in units of the New Testament"?⁶⁰ Can the canons of Greco-Roman rhetoric be used to interpret all genres which intend to persuade?⁶¹

Besides these reservations, there is also the danger of a too rigid application of rhetorical categories to the biblical texts. Black notes "a disquieting tendency to press oracles or letters into elaborate rhetorical schemes of organization (from *proem* to *epilogos*)."⁶² This is a valid concern which usually surfaces in the face of a detailed analysis of a rhetorical unit or entire New Testament book. Cautions like this are often

⁵⁹SBLDS 104; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988.

⁶⁰*New Testament Interpretation*, 33.

⁶¹Questions raised by Black, "Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation," 257.

⁶²Black, "Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation," 255.

based on the assumption that this approach to rhetorical criticism assumes that New Testament writers sat down with rhetorical handbooks to compose their works. Or it is assumed that those using this approach trust that the ancients did the same thing- analyzed a work using rhetorical handbooks.⁶³ These are only false impressions based on preconceived limits accorded this method. It is more accurate to say that this method discovers and uncovers rhetorical techniques utilized in the composition of the New Testament, whether consciously or unconsciously applied. Put another way, this method realigns the New Testament with its rhetorical origins.

Currently this approach almost exclusively depends upon rhetorical theory alone. Such restrictive reliance upon the rhetorical handbooks can lead to an imbalanced view of the New Testament documents. Ancient theory was descriptive, not prescriptive; an abstraction from previous rhetoric and its situations. However, the situations were to be the guide to rhetoric as need arose, not theory. Thus "...ancient theory is not always adequate to analyze or explain the forces which shaped actual rhetorical practice."⁶⁴ The methodology as currently practiced does need to broaden its primary source base. The practices reflected in the extant letters and speeches composed by orators of Greece and Rome must be brought to bear in analysis. Using actual speeches and letters gives the rhetorical critical art a greater flexibility, credibility, and comprehensiveness. Since ancient rhetoric fully recognized the need to adapt to the needs of the rhetorical situation, the ancient rhetor could, and often did, veer from conventional theory and practice. Study of the actual products of rhetorical art helps recognize this flexibility in the New Testament works as well.⁶⁵

2.2 Using Modern Rhetoric

When one turns to the categories of rhetoric as tools for a more adequate and thorough appreciation of texts, their general structure and their details, one should not hesitate to use the most developed and sophisticated form, as it will offer more help than any other. For there is no good reason to assume that a text could and should be examined only according to categories known (or possibly known) to the author concerned. For rhetoric provides a system for the interpretation of all texts (as well as of oral utterances and even of other forms of communication), irrespectively of time and circumstances (except, of

⁶³S.E. Porter, "The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature" (unpublished paper presented at the Conference on Rhetorical Criticism of Biblical Documents, Heidelberg, Germany, July 1992) 3, 5-7, 10-11.

⁶⁴Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 25. G.W. Hansen (*Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* [JSNTSS 29; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989] 56-57) gives the same assessment.

⁶⁵Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 8-11.

course, for the fact that some rules of rhetoric immediately concern the external circumstances).⁶⁶

This quotation from Classen represents the view of many interpreters for whom conducting rhetorical analysis solely according to Greco-Roman rhetoric is too limited and in need of supplementation with modern rhetorical theory.⁶⁷ Thurén considers a solely Greco-Roman rhetorical approach an "obstacle" which prevents "an effective use of rhetorical criticism."⁶⁸ Pogoloff remarks that "the scholar who distinguishes between 'old' and 'new' rhetoric may still 'intertwine' them. In fact, the modern critic often must 'intertwine' them, since ancient rhetorical theories are simply inadequate for certain hermeneutical tasks."⁶⁹ Ancient rhetoric does not address all theoretical, practical, philosophical questions posed by speech. Even in his rhetorical analysis of the New Testament Melancthon modified or supplemented ancient rhetoric where it seemed deficient or needed further elaboration in light of more modern theories of rhetoric.⁷⁰

Texts are rhetorical and capable of being analyzed by the principles of both Greco-Roman and modern rhetoric. Both ancient and modern rhetorical criticism are concerned with two interrelated areas: "the text's discursive techniques" and "the functioning of these techniques employed to provoke, or to increase, the support of minds, on the part of the readers, to the action presented for approval."⁷¹ Greco-Roman rhetoric is primarily interested in the creation of communication as oriented to the speaker, although some consideration of the audience reaction is present. Modern rhetoric is also interested in the effect of the rhetoric upon the audience, but further emphasizes the larger social context of communication which includes both speaker and audience. It is concerned with the effect of the communication upon the speaker and the audience.⁷²

Rhetorical criticism using modern rhetoric is a philosophical reconceptualization of Greco-Roman rhetoric, a synchronic approach to argumentation which does not suit purely historical investigation as well as the methodology of Kennedy and others discussed above. Mitchell warns,

⁶⁶Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles," 3; cf. 8.

⁶⁷Botha, "On the 'Reinvention' of Rhetoric," 14-31; L. Thurén, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions* (Åbo: Åbo Academy, 1990) 41-78; Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism and its Theory in Culture-Critical Perspective," 171-85; Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 7-35.

⁶⁸*Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter*, 47.

⁶⁹*Logos and Sophia*, 25.

⁷⁰Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles," 5-8.

⁷¹Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism and its Theory in Culture-Critical Perspective," 171.

⁷²Botha, "On the 'Reinvention' of Rhetoric," 24-25; Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter*,

Appeals to modern philosophical examinations of the rhetorical force of all texts should not be put at the service of historical arguments...they should not be confused or intertwined with historical arguments about Paul's rhetoric in the light of the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition, the sources for which are ancient texts.⁷³

However, some intertwining can occur without confusion.⁷⁴ Thurén sees modern rhetoric going beyond the questions of historical investigation without neglecting it.

A rhetorical approach neither ignores the historical aspect of the text nor solely depends on it. Rhetorical criticism takes historical information seriously, but instead of being descriptive it seeks to penetrate the intention of the text, e.g. which general knowledge or values in the historical situation are helpful for the argument. Its main objective is not to reconstruct the original, historical, real readers or the real author (we must distinguish also between the real author and the author as he appears in the text), but to focus on the text as a more or less independent argumentative entity. It is interested in the situation of the text for the sake of argumentation.⁷⁵

Wilhelm Wuellner, one of the first and finest advocates for rhetorical analysis of the New Testament according to a variety of ancient and modern theories states,

A theory based on *modern* rhetoric would follow one of three lines: 1) the Anglo-American theories of argumentation, sharpened by the reception of Perelman's *New Rhetoric* ...; 2) the Continental theories of literary rhetoric...; [and] 3) the largely American theories of rhetoric as part of social science hermeneutics."⁷⁶

He identifies four features of theory and practice using modern rhetoric: 1) "the turn toward argumentation... and the designation of arguments as a text-type distinct from narrative and description"...; 2) "focus on the text's rhetorical intentionality or exigency"; 3) "the social, cultural, ideological values imbedded in the argument's premises, *topoi*, and hierarchies"; and 4) "The rhetorical or stylistic techniques... are seen as means to an end, and not as merely formal, decorative features."⁷⁷ Prominent in rhetorical analysis is the use of the "new rhetoric" represented by Chaim Perelman, W.J.

⁷³Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 7.

⁷⁴Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 25.

⁷⁵Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter*, 55.

⁷⁶Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism and its Theory in Culture-Critical Perspective," 176.

⁷⁷Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism and its Theory in Culture-Critical Perspective," 176-77.

Brandt, Kenneth Burke and others.⁷⁸ For example, Folker Siegert uses the new rhetoric of Perelman to analyze the argumentation of Romans 9-11.⁷⁹

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca redefine rhetoric as argumentation with a persuasive intent rather than as mere style aimed at ornamentation. Speech is seen as part of the historical and social situation which produced it and in which it was enacted. Rhetoric can then take its place as a liaison between text and social context, assessing the latter through the former. It promises to discover the social setting behind the rhetorical response.⁸⁰ The link between rhetorical and social situation will be one of the primary areas of rhetorical investigation in the future.

Rhetorical analysis using modern rhetoric is often combined with literary criticism, text linguistics, semiotics, social description, stylistics, reader-response criticism, discourse analysis, and/or speech act theory. These cross-disciplinary studies and their trends are as yet difficult to identify and categorize. These will not be discussed here, but many examples are found in the following bibliography and will hopefully spur further research.

3. *Rhetorical Criticism of the Gospels*

Many individual rhetorical features of the rhetoric of the Gospels have been studied, including alliteration, ambiguity, antithesis, chiasm, dialogue, digressions, enthymemes, humor, imitation, *inclusio*, irony, maxims, metaphors, parallelism, polemics, and proverbs.⁸¹ These studies have made their own important contributions. However, a thorough and balanced assessment of the rhetoric of the Gospels has yet to be written. This assessment is currently underway and will be a great source of future discussion in Gospel studies.⁸²

The method of Kennedy outlined above has been applied to portions of the Gospels. He himself specifically analyzes the Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Plain, and the Farewell Discourse of the

⁷⁸Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*; W.J. Brandt, *The Rhetoric of Argumentation* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970); K. Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California, 1970).

⁷⁹*Argumentation bei Paulus gezeigt an Röm 9 bis 11* (WUNT 34; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1985).

⁸⁰Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 14-16, 24, 93-94, 97.

⁸¹See the works listed in the bibliography below under Gospels.

⁸²For discussions of rhetorical criticism of the Gospels, see D.F. Watson, "Rhetorical Criticism," *DJG* 698-701; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, chs. 2, 3, 5; Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 49-56, 78-92; B.L. Mack and V.K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Foundations and Facets: Literary Facets; Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1989).

Fourth Gospel.⁸³ He also provides an overview of the rhetorical features of all four Gospels. Matthew uses rhetoric in the most comprehensive way, attending to invention, arrangement, style, and amplification. This is particularly attributable to the planned provision of logical proof that Jesus was the Messiah. Mark utilizes radical Christian rhetoric, rhetoric characterized by claims of authority and absolute proof and a lack of logical proof. Luke relies upon *prosopopoeia*, the recreation of speech and dialogue to suit characters and occasions. Luke most closely resembles a classical biographer. John is written in elevated style or *hypsos* (sublimity) created by great thoughts, strong emotion, figures of speech, and arrangement of words.⁸⁴

Having discussed the Sermon on the Mount and Plain, Kennedy makes this intriguing statement:

Behind the rhetoric of the two evangelists in these sermons stands their perception of the rhetoric of Jesus, and behind that perception stands the actual rhetoric of Jesus. The last of these, first in chronological sequence, cannot be objectively determined, but it may be possible to make some suggestions about the evangelists' perception or preconceptions of the rhetoric of Jesus. They sought to give a picture of Jesus in which they believed and in which they wished others to believe.⁸⁵

This raises the additional problem of distinguishing and analyzing the rhetoric of the historical Jesus, the Jesus tradition, and the Gospels. For example, Mack rightly discusses separately the rhetoric of the Jesus tradition (using Q) and the rhetoric of the Gospels.⁸⁶

Studying the Gospels as a single rhetorical unit using Kennedy's method has not worked. It cannot work. This is due to limitations in ancient rhetoric. Ancient rhetoric did not have a theory of narrative which discussed plot with issue, development, and resolution of the issue. Rhetorical usage was limited to smaller units in larger works, and involved description and speeches.⁸⁷ This fact lead scholarship to the *chreia* and an ancient pattern of argumentation.

Although the methodology of Kennedy outlined above is applicable to portions of the Gospels, the study of the ancient *chreia* has illumined

⁸³New Testament Interpretation, chs. 2 and 3.

⁸⁴New Testament Interpretation, ch. 5. This chapter is also found as "An Introduction to the Rhetoric of the Gospels," *Rhetorica* 1 (1983) 17-31.

⁸⁵New Testament Interpretation, 67.

⁸⁶Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 49-56, 78-92.

⁸⁷Mack, *Rhetoric in the New Testament*, 79-80.

the rhetoric of the Gospels with more precision.⁸⁸ A *chreia* (pl. *chreiai*) is "a saying or action that expressed concisely, attributed to a character, and regarded as useful for living."⁸⁹ Chreiai were central to oral and written communication in the Greco-Roman world, especially for discussing the words and deeds of philosophers, kings, military commanders, and even ordinary people. They were a form of preserving cultural wisdom and were often placed in collections. An example of a chreia is: "Diogenes the philosopher, on being asked by someone how he could become famous, responded: 'By worrying as little as possible about fame.'"⁹⁰ The chreia was central to both oral and written argumentation.

The chreia was the basis of many rhetorical exercises described in the *progymnasmata* (preliminary exercises), the rhetorical textbooks written from the 1st to the 5th centuries A.D. These progymnasmata were the curricula for post-secondary education and preparation for rhetorical instruction and public life in the Roman Empire. The progymnasmata give us most of our information about the chreia.⁹¹

The progymnasmata taught the student to work out (*ergasia*) the meaning of the saying or action in the chreia, using long-established topics. Several progymnasmata survive, but the one most commonly used to interpret the New Testament is that of Aelius Theon of Alexandria, a contemporary of the New Testament (ca. 50-100 A.D.). His elaboration of a chreia includes recitation of the chreia in similar words (*ἀπαγγελία*), inflection in all the numbers and cases of the language (*κλίσις*), commentary or positive statement appended to the chreia (*ἐπιφώνησις*), objection or negative statement appended to the chreia which is antithetical to the commentary (*ἀντιλογία*), expansion or recitation at greater length (*ἐπεκτείνειν*), condensation or recitation in more concise form (*συστέλλειν*), refutation (*ἀνασκευή*), and/or confirmation (*κατασκευή*).⁹² The *Progymnasmata* of Hermogenes includes the following eight topics for the working out of a chreia and presenting a complete

⁸⁸R.F. Hock and E.N. O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric: Volume I. The Progymnasmata* (Texts and Translations 27; Graeco-Roman Religion Series 9; Atlanta: Scholars, 1986); J.R. Butts, "The Chreia in the Synoptic Gospels," *BTB* 16 (1986) 132-38; Mack & Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels*; B.L. Mack, *Anecdotes and Arguments: The Chreia in Antiquity and Early Christianity* (Occasional Papers 10; Claremont, CA: The Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, 1987); V.K. Robbins, "The Chreia," *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament* (ed. D.E. Aune; SBLSPS 21; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988) 1-23; D.F. Watson, "Chreia/Aphorism," *DJG* 104-106.

⁸⁹Hock and O'Neil, *Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*, 26.

⁹⁰Hock and O'Neil, *Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*, 85.

⁹¹See Hock and O'Neil, *Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*, for translations of primary sources.

⁹²Hock and O'Neil, *Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*, 95-107; Mack and Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion*, ch. 2.

argument or even an entire speech, the chreia functioning as a thesis: praise of the author (ἔπαινος), the chreia, rationale (αἰτία), statement from the opposite (τὸ ἐναντίον), analogy (παραπολή), example (παραδειγμα), citation of an authority (κρισίς), and exhortation (παρακλήσις).⁹³ The sayings, actions, and situations of chreiai can be expanded with elements of these exercises.

Chreiai were known and used by the rabbis at the time of Jesus and can be expected to be found in literature from a Jewish provenance.⁹⁴ Also, the works of Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius show that chreiai were collected and expanded for use in biographies. Because of their Jewish provenance and their similarities with ancient biography, there is a probability we will find chreiai in the Gospels- and we do. Chreiai elaborations are basic literary units of the Gospels. Naturally these chreiai are the words and deeds of Jesus, and these words and deeds expressed and expanded by the early church and the Gospel writers. One example is Matt 8:18-20: "Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. A scribe then approached and said, 'Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head' (NRSV).

Studying the chreiai illumines the formation and oral transmission of the Gospel tradition, and the way the Gospel writers used this tradition to construct their Gospels. The sayings and actions of Jesus were naturally transmitted as chreiai, probably in both oral and written form. These chreiai were elaborated by the Gospel writers and those engaged in teaching and preaching. The Gospel writers were familiar with chreiai and were able to utilize the progymnasmatic exercises to elaborate the chreiai of Jesus according to rhetorical conventions to suit their polemical, theological, and literary needs. This is demonstrated by the fact that a chreia in one Gospel is elaborated in its parallel account. For example, Mark 10:13-16 is an elaborated chreia that is found in a more condensed form in Matt. 19:13-15. Pronouncement stories tend to be elaborated chreiai.⁹⁵

⁹³Hock and O'Neil, *Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*, 153-81.

⁹⁴H.A. Fischel, "Studies in Cynicism and the Ancient Near East: The Transformation of a Chreia," *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (ed. J. Neusner; SHR 14; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968) 372-411.

⁹⁵Robbins, "Chreia," 1-23; Butts, "Chreia in the Synoptic Gospels," 137-38; Mack, "Anecdotes and Arguments," 29-41; Mack and Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion*, esp. chs. 1-2.

Mack and Robbins warn,

... chreiai should not be taken as historical reminiscences merely because of their authenticity as a primary form of memory in Greco-Roman society. That is because chreiai bear the marks of being crafted. The meaning of an action or saying is assured only when the response is constructed to fit a carefully construed situation. In the quest to locate a chreia among differing traditions, we must discern the issue engaged by that scene plus response.... It was "speech-in-character," not the "authenticity" of a historical reminiscence, that counted in the cultivation of memory and mimesis.⁹⁶

This challenges traditional gospel studies which view the sayings of Jesus as traveling separately in oral tradition and independent of narrative context. Sayings of similar nature were often gathered with scene attached. Sayings were gathered, not simply by type or theme, but by rhetorical needs of those composing a rhetorical text. "The lesson from the chreia and its patterns of elaboration is a call to revise prevailing views of the teachings of Jesus, and a challenge to research the early history of the traditions of those teachings."⁹⁷

The chreia has been largely ignored in Gospel studies. This is due in part to the negative assessment of M. Dibelius who, because of an inadequate understanding of the chreia and its role in philosophy and education, did not see similarities between the chreia and units of the Gospels. He saw the chreia functioning mainly in the biographies of philosophers.⁹⁸ This neglect is also due to the poor, dated editions of the primary texts and a lack of English translations. Until recently there were the exceptions of Taylor and Farmer who recognized the role of the chreia in the Gospels.⁹⁹ When studied from the perspective of the chreia, the Gospel writers seem to have had a rhetorical education.

Besides the use of chreiai in rhetorical criticism, there are also studies showing that portions of the Gospels were written according to rhetorical imitation of examples and narrative paradigms. T.L. Brodie argues that portions of Luke's Gospel are constructed in imitation of Old

⁹⁶*Patterns of Persuasion*, 202.

⁹⁷*Patterns of Persuasion*, 203.

⁹⁸*From Tradition to Gospel* (trans. B.L. Woolf; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, n.d.) 152-64; Robbins, "The Chreia," 12; Butts, "Chreia in the Synoptic Gospels," 133; Mack and Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion*, 1-17.

⁹⁹R.O.P. Taylor, *The Groundwork of the Gospels* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946) ch. 10; W.R. Farmer, "Notes on a Literary and Form-Critical Analysis of Some of the Synoptic Material Peculiar to Luke," *NTS* 8 (1961/62) 307-16.

Testament texts.¹⁰⁰ W.S. Kurz argues that not only does the Gospel of Luke imitate other texts, it also holds up positive and negative examples for moral imitation.¹⁰¹ Besides rhetorical analysis primarily based upon Greco-Roman rhetoric there are many important studies which use varying degrees of modern rhetorical theory. These include those using literary criticism, narrative criticism, and sociology.¹⁰²

4. Rhetorical Criticism of the Epistles

A vigorous debate transpires concerning the extent that Greco-Roman rhetorical theory influenced the epistolary genre in antiquity. One facet of this debate concerns the relationship between rhetoric and the epistles of the New Testament, particularly those of Paul.¹⁰³ Interpreters find themselves either embracing one of the following positions, or standing between them: 1) the New Testament epistles are just that- epistles- and rhetoric has only a secondary influence. Rhetorical influence is mostly limited to matters of style and some invention,¹⁰⁴ and 2) the epistles of

¹⁰⁰"Greco-Roman Imitation of Texts as a Partial Guide to Luke's Use of Sources," *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar* (ed. C.H. Talbert; New York: Crossroad, 1984) 17-46.

¹⁰¹"Narrative Models for Imitation in Luke-Acts," *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (eds. D. Balch et al; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 171-89.

¹⁰²D. Rhoads and D. Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); V.K. Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984; repr. with new introduction, 1992); D.B. Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story: A Study in the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel* (JSNTSS 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990).

¹⁰³For an overview of the relationship between rhetorical and epistolary theory, with discussion of primary texts, see B.C. Johanson, *To All the Brethren: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians* (ConBNT 16; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987) 42-43; Hughes, *2 Thessalonians*, 24-30; Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts*, chs. 1-2; Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter*, 57-64; A.J. Malherbe, "'Seneca' on Paul as Letter Writer," *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester* (ed. B.A. Pearson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 414-21; E.R. Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT 42; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991) 132-36, 140-44; Classen, "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik"; id., "St. Paul's Epistles"; G. Strecker, *Literaturgeschichte des Neuen Testaments* (UTB für Wissenschaft: Uni-Taschenbücher 1682; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992) 86-95. Also, the following unpublished papers presented at the Conference on Rhetorical Criticism of Biblical Documents, Heidelberg, Germany, July 1992: S.E. Porter, "The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature"; J.T. Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories to Interpret Paul's Letters: A Question of Genre."

¹⁰⁴Among others, W.G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973) 50-51; Classen, "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik"; id., "St. Paul's Epistles"; Porter, "Theoretical Justification"; Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories"; H. Hübner, "Der Galatierbrief und das Verhältnis von antiker Rhetorik und Epistolographie," *TLZ* 109 (1984) 241-

the New Testament are speeches in epistolary form and can be analyzed using Greco-Roman rhetorical theory in its three main parts: invention, arrangement, and style. New Testament epistles are essentially speeches with epistolary openings and closings.¹⁰⁵ Those between these two positions recognize various degrees of influence by rhetorical and epistolary theory¹⁰⁶ or argue that both epistolary and rhetorical theory influence the text at different levels.¹⁰⁷

The debate is based in part upon the fact that epistolary theory and rhetorical theory were developed separately in antiquity.¹⁰⁸ Most ancient rhetorical handbooks rarely, if ever, discuss the role of rhetoric in epistles. When they do, they focus on stylistic matters.¹⁰⁹ The first extant rhetorical handbook to discuss letter writing was that of Julius Victor from the fourth century A.D. (*Ars Rhetorica* 27- *De Epistolis*). Likewise manuals for writing epistles do not instruct in rhetorical technique (such as arrangement) but rather focus on the practical classification of the various types of epistles and their appropriate style.¹¹⁰ "Epistolary theory in antiquity belonged to the domain of the rhetoricians, but it was not originally part of their theoretical systems. It was absent from the earliest extant rhetorical handbooks, and it only gradually made its way into the

50, esp. 249-50.

¹⁰⁵Among others, D.E. Aune, "Romans as a *Logos Protreptikos* in the Context of Ancient Religious and Philosophical Propaganda," *Paulus und antike Judentum* (eds. M. Hengel and U. Heckel; WUNT 58; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991) 91-121; abbreviated version in *The Romans Debate* (ed. K.P. Donfried; 2nd ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991); K. Berger, "Apostelbrief und apostolische Rede/Zum Formular frühchristlicher Briefe," *ZNW* 65 (1974) 190-231; id., *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1984) 216-17; id., "Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament," *ANRW II. Principat* 25.2 *Religion* (eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984) 1031-1432; Betz, *Galatians*; id., *2 Corinthians* 8 and 9; Bünker, *1. Korintherbrief*; Holland, *2 Thessalonians*; Hughes, *2 Thessalonians*; Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*; Richards, *Role of the Secretary*, 132-36, 140-44 (particularly style); W.G. Übelacker, *Der Hebräerbrief als Appell. I. Untersuchungen zu exordium, narratio und postscriptum (Hebr 1-2 und 13,22-25)*; Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style*.

¹⁰⁶Johanson, *To All the Brethren*, 42-43; J.-N. Aletti, "La *dispositio* rhétorique dans le épîtres pauliniennes," *NTS* 38 (1992) 385-401.

¹⁰⁷Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter*, 58; Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*.

¹⁰⁸A.J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (SBLSPS 19; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988) 3-6; S.K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (LEC 5; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 51-52; Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles," 4, 19.

¹⁰⁹Demetrius, *De Elocutione*, 223-35; Julius Victor, *Ars rhetorica*, 27 (*De Epistolis*) in Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 62-64, and C. Halm, ed., *Rhetores Latini Minores* (Leipzig: B.J. Teubner, 1863).

¹¹⁰Pseudo Demetrius, ΤΥΠΟΙ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΙ and Pseudo Libanius ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΑΙΜΑΙΟΙ ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΕΣ in Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 30-41, 66-81; and in an edition edited by Valentin Weichert (Leipzig: B.J. Teubner, 1910).

genre."¹¹¹ Christianity did not integrate rhetorical and epistolary practices until the fourth and fifth centuries (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, Augustine).¹¹²

Greco-Roman rhetorical theory classifies speeches by the three species of judicial, deliberative, and epideictic. There are epistles which can be classified according to these three species as well. However, this classification of epistles only partially works because of the above mentioned fact that epistolary and rhetorical theory were not integrated.¹¹³ The large varieties of letters naturally produce some functional parallels with all three species. D.E. Aune summarizes, "Early Christian letters tend to resist rigid classification, either in terms of the three main types of oratory or in terms of the many categories listed by the epistolary theorists."¹¹⁴

Inventional topics in epistolary theory are determined in large part by the type of epistle needed to address a specific social context, rather than the needs of argumentation.¹¹⁵ Ethos and pathos, two types of proof by logos, occur frequently in letters. Epistolary theory did not prescribe rhetorical arrangement for epistles because formulaic traditions held a powerful sway. There are only functional parallels between epistolary and rhetorical arrangement. The body opening, middle, and closing roughly parallel *exordium*, *narratio-confirmatio*, and *peroratio* respectively.¹¹⁶ Style was shared by both rhetorical and epistolary theory. However, epistolary theory differentiates between style appropriate to both epistles and rhetoric (Quint. *Institutio Oratoria* 9.4.19-22). Also, epistles did not consistently use rhetorical style.¹¹⁷

To date the discussion has been conducted by perhaps an all too rigid logic: rhetoric and epistolary theory are not integrated in the remaining handbooks and epistolary manuals of the Greco-Roman period, so we cannot expect to find considerable or full development of invention, arrangement, and style in epistles. To the contrary Aune can argue that by the first century B.C. rhetoric had exerted a strong influence on epistolary composition. Letters had become "sophisticated instruments of

¹¹¹Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 2.

¹¹²Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories," 2.

¹¹³Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 51-52.

¹¹⁴*The New Testament in its Literary Environment* (LEC 8; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987) 203.

¹¹⁵Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 53-56; Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories," 5-7. Classen ("St. Paul's Epistles," 19) allows for some overlap of invention in rhetorical and epistolary theory.

¹¹⁶Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles," 4, 16; Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories," 7-9.

¹¹⁷Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories," 9-11.

persuasion and media for displaying literary skill."¹¹⁸ Utilizing the work of J.A. Goldstein,¹¹⁹ Hughes demonstrates that the epistles of Demosthenes were written according to rhetorical conventions in their full form.¹²⁰ He also points out that H. Peter argued that epistolary theory was a part of rhetorical tradition. Official letters were substitutes for speeches and thus epistolary theory was a part of rhetorical training.¹²¹ Rhetorical handbooks themselves may not have discussed epistolary theory because they were dominated by the concerns of judicial rhetoric which was rarely appropriate for letter writing. Also, their focus was upon speeches, not written works. Thus the influence of rhetoric in epistles cannot be ruled out based on the paucity of discussion of epistles in rhetorical handbooks alone.¹²²

It is imperative at this point in the debate that we shift from theory and handbooks to systematic analysis of the rhetoric of the extant literary epistles of ancient orators themselves. This has not as yet been accomplished. Only in this way can the purely theoretical be tested- by the practice of those knowing both rhetorical and epistolary theory.¹²³

Turning to the rhetoric of the Pauline epistles we read sentiments as contrary as these:¹²⁴ "There is...no theoretical justification in the ancient handbooks for application of the formal categories of the species and organization of rhetoric to the analysis of the Pauline epistles."¹²⁵ "...Saint Paul is not making a speech, and that rules for speeches and other types of compositions cannot be expected always to be easily applicable to letters, especially as ancient theorists seem to have been aware of the very particular nature of letters."¹²⁶ "The use of rhetorical techniques, especially in the theological body of St. Paul's letters, indicates that a knowledge of these traditions is quite relevant to the study of

¹¹⁸Aune, *New Testament in its Literary Environment*, 160.

¹¹⁹*The Letters of Demosthenes* (New York and London: Columbia University, 1968).

¹²⁰2 *Thessalonians*, 47-50.

¹²¹*Der Brief in der römischen Literatur: Literaturgeschichtliche Untersuchungen und Zusammenfassungen* (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, philologisch-historische Classe, 20.3; Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1901; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965) 14, 19; Hughes, 2 *Thessalonians*, 26.

¹²²Hughes, 2 *Thessalonians*, 28-29.

¹²³A point well made and the merits of such advice demonstrated by Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 8-11.

¹²⁴For the history of rhetorical criticism of the Pauline epistles, see Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," 16-48; Hughes, 2 *Thessalonians*, ch. 2; C.J. Classen, "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik"; id., "St. Paul's Epistles."

¹²⁵Porter, "Theoretical Justification," 11. For similar sentiments, see A.D. Nock, *St. Paul* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938) 234; and Grant, "Rhetoric and Oratory," 76-77.

¹²⁶Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles," 13-14 (written in regards to Galatians).

early Christian letters.¹²⁷ "The high literary quality of Paul's letters resulted from the fact that on the one hand he was able to make masterly use of a wealth of rhetorical possibilities, while on the other hand he exhibited a tendency toward highly original combinations."¹²⁸

These sentiments raise the question, "If, or to what extent, did Paul have rhetorical training, and did he employ rhetorical theory in a conscious manner?" Classen argues that rhetorical features occurring in a text may originate from four sources: rhetorical theory deliberately applied, imitation of written or spoken practice, unconscious borrowing, or a gift for effective oral and written communication. He attributes Paul's rhetorical effectiveness to unconscious borrowing from the practice of others, particularly from reading Greek works and from the rhetoric of the Old Testament.¹²⁹ Reed says virtually the same thing: "if rhetorical elements do appear in Paul's letters, one must allow for the possibility that Paul's usage may be functionally related to, but not formally based upon, the ancient rhetorical practices."¹³⁰

To many scholars Paul's usage of rhetoric is studied and formally related to ancient rhetorical practices, not just functionally related or unconsciously borrowed. R. Grant suggests that Paul has rhetorical skill based on "a careful study either of rhetorical manuals or of some literary model or models. Admittedly we have no idea of what Paul's sources were. It seems certain that they existed."¹³¹ Kennedy writes, "Rhetorical schools were common in the Hellenized cities of the East when Paul was a boy, and he could have attended one; certainly he was familiar with the rhetorical conventions of speeches in Roman lawcourts, the oral teachings of Greek philosophers, and the conventions of Greek letter-writing."¹³² This question will undoubtedly continue to be debated.

The position restricting the role of rhetoric in the Pauline epistles is challenged by convincing rhetorical analyses of entire Pauline epistles or significant portions of them. Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon have been, in varying degrees, successfully analyzed according to the conventions of invention,

¹²⁷J.L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (FFNT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 3.

¹²⁸Betz, 8 & 9 *Corinthians*, 129-30.

¹²⁹"St. Paul's Epistles," 3-4, 20.

¹³⁰"Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories," 18; cf. 16-17.

¹³¹"Hellenistic Elements in 1 Corinthians," *Early Christian Origins: Studies in honor of Harold R. Willoughby* (ed. Allen Wikgren; Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961) 65.

¹³²*Classical Rhetoric*, 130; cf. *New Testament Interpretation*, 9-10; Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*, 55-56.

arrangement, and style.¹³³ If Paul's epistles were to be read in the churches, a logical assumption is that they were fashioned in a way closely akin to a speech. It is conceded that since the body of the ancient letter was dictated by the needs of the author, one cannot rule out the use of rhetorical theory here.¹³⁴ Paul, needing to communicate over vast distances has a rhetorical need to be persuasive and has used rhetorical theory in his letter body.

I would like to conclude these notes on history and method with the following quotation which aptly describes the present situation: "New Testament scholarship, especially since the flood of rhetorical studies which have emerged since Kennedy's book, is in a reflective and reflexive mode."¹³⁵ It is my hope that this volume will facilitate that reflection.

¹³³Aletti ("La *dispositio* rhétorique") warns about the dangers of overstating the case for arrangement in Pauline letters (that they necessarily are entirely arranged according to Greco-Roman convention) and discusses those portions of the Pauline letters where Greco-Roman arrangement is clearly evident.

¹³⁴Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories," 9.

¹³⁵Stamps, "Rhetorical Criticism," 272.

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